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A special volume on Aesthetic Experience
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A special volume on Aesthetic Experience

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CONTENTS

Michael H. Mitias	1-5	Editorial: Concept of Aesthetic Experience
V. K. Chari	7-30	Aesthetic Experience: A Review
Robert Wilkinson	31-52	Nishida and Santayana on Goethe. An Essay in Comparative Aesthetics
Allan Casebier	53-59	Japanese Aesthetic
Stephanie A. Ross	61-78	Aesthetic Qualities, Aesthetic Experience, Aesthetic Value
Grazia Marchiano	79-85	Launching out into the Aesthetic Depth
Carol S. Gould	87-99	The Impenetrable Looking Glass: Plato on the Different Possibilities of the Visual and Literary Arts
David E. W. Fenner	101-117	Defining the Aesthetic

Book Reviews by
A.C. Sukla, B.C.Dash
Books Received

Editorial: Concept of Aesthetic Experience

MICHAEL H. MITIAS

"Aesthetic experience" refers to the mental event in which a person apprehends and enjoys an art work or a beautiful object. What makes this type of experience aesthetic and distinguishes it from other types of experience such as moral, religious, cognitive, or sexual experiences? It would seem that an adequate understanding of the concept of aesthetic expedience should be the starting point in our study of the nature of art and aesthetic evaluation; for it is reasonable to hold that we cannot explain the meaning and possibility of aesthetic judgement, on the one hand, and what makes an object or event art or beautiful, on the other, if we do not first experience the object or event. For example, how can I say that Michelangelo's *David* is beautiful, or that it is art, if I do not first experience, or feel, its beauty or artistic aspect? The assertion that *David* is beautiful, or that it is an art work, reflects, it indeed articulates, the way I experience these two different aspects of the statue.

But a number of contemporary aestheticians (Hospers, Dickie, Price, Kennick, Weitz) denied the significance of the concept of aesthetic experience in our attempt to understand the nature of art and the basis of aesthetic judgment and called for its dismissal from the realm of aesthetic discourse for at least three reasons: (1) we cannot intelligibly speak of "aesthetic experience" primarily because we cannot identify or capture the reality to which this expression refers, and we cannot capture this reality because it lacks a structure which we can conceive or in some way describe; (2) we cannot discover a feature or set of features common to the class of events called "aesthetic."

Structure of the Aesthetic Experience

When I speak of the structure of aesthetic experience I mean the elements— emotions, ideas, images, moods, insight — which constitute its being

and distinguish it as a particular identity to which we can refer and which we can describe in certain ways; I also mean the way these elements are organized into a coherent whole. In this experience the attention of the perceiver is totally given to the objective properties of the aesthetic object, i.e., to the lines, colors, sounds, words, marble, or motions which present themselves as a *significant form*. The perception of these properties produces in the perceiver what we may call a complex percept. This percept is an affective state; its texture is feeling. The term "feeling" may be used in two ways: (1) as "the faculty or power by which one feels," and (2) "what one feels in regard to something." (OED) This definition suggests that feeling is a basic, primitive, mental operation by which the mind perceives an aspect or an object and forms an impression of it in the activity of perception. The mind is not, in this activity, a passive but an active, creative power which apprehends not only the qualities, relations, and objectivities which make up the given object as form but also what this form means, suggests, or signifies. The mind is a main factor in unifying, or integrating, the elements of the aesthetic experience into an organic whole.

Aesthetic experience is, broadly speaking, composed of three basic types of element: vehicle, affects, and aesthetic qualities.

1. *Vehicle*. This term refers to the sensuous "form" which the artist produces during the process of artistic creation, e.g., the painting which hangs on the wall of a museum or the film which I now see on the screen. This form is the most basic ingredient of the aesthetic experience. It should not be viewed as a separate or independent part of the experience but as an integral element of it, for in the activity of aesthetic perception the sensuous character of the art work acquires a new identity and a new mode of being; it is transformed into a living, spiritual reality in and by the consciousness which perceives it. The vehicle is, moreover, the structured medium, i.e., foundation, of the aesthetic experience within which the rest of the elements cohere and play their individual rolls in the course of the experience. In an aesthetic experience a person one, i.e., identical, with the aesthetic object.

2. *Affects*. In addition to the vehicle, we encounter in the aesthetic experience a multitude of mental states: emotions, images, desires, excitements, ideas, moods, intentions, expectations, insights. These states are formed in the course of responding to and apprehending the aesthetic character of the art work. The fundamental response to the art work, however, is affective in character; we respond to it not in terms of ideas, description, or judgment but in terms of feeling,

and the basic content of this feeling is affects. This is based on the assumption that an art work is not, generally speaking, a scientific or philosophical treatise; it is an expressive object intended for the affective faculty of the imagination. Even in literary works where ideas are dominant the aim of the artist is not to argue, theorize, describe, or judge but to make us, by the power of form, see, hear, touch — in short, to make us feel. Affects are modes of feeling essential features of reality.

3. *Aesthetic Qualities.* By "aesthetic quality" we usually mean aspects like "elegance," "grandeur," "cheerfulness," or "beauty." These qualities are the highest point, indeed *raison d'etre*, of the art work and the aesthetic experience. An aesthetic quality acquires the status of "aesthetic value" when it is realized and apprehended as meaning in the course of the aesthetic experience. Discourse about aesthetic value is essentially discourse about aesthetic meaning.

Unity of Aesthetic Experience

What makes an experience a distinct identity is possession of a dominant aesthetic quality. This quality creates an atmosphere — a general mood — in terms of which consciousness actualizes the aesthetic object in its experience. Accordingly, aesthetic quality is the basic principle of the unity of the aesthetic experience.

Now, when we characterize an aesthetic experience as "unified" we mean that its elements are inter-related; this inter-relatedness bestows upon it a distinct identity, or character which distinguishes it from other experiences, things, or events. What is the basis of this inter-relatedness? An answer to this question is crucial, for the mere structuring of the data of an experience according to a certain pattern is not sufficient to make them unified. For example, many of the cities of the contemporary world are in a sense structured, but they are not aesthetically unified. I may read a poem and comprehend the meaning of its words and follow it sentence by sentence, but I may not make sense of it. Mere structuring is a necessary condition for unity, but it is not sufficient to make it possible. In order for the elements of an event or an object to be unified each element must cohere with the other elements; it must share with them a definite relation. In this relation it contributes to the general character of the whole, on the one hand, and acquires a particular role and significance in the life of the whole, on the other. The inter-relatedness of a whole produces a general character which is peculiar to the whole. This character emerges from the *dynamic* relatedness of the parts to each other. When the elements of an aesthetic experience are related

in this way, they are unified. The basis of this unity, however, is the complex of the aesthetic qualities which the artist has created in the artistic process and embodied in the work as a significant form. These qualities are not given as ready-made realities but as potentialities awaiting realization in the aesthetic experience. This is why most aestheticians from Kant and Hegel to Beardsley and Osborne have maintained that the art work is essentially a schematic formation. This formation is the basis of the aesthetic experience. Its structure determines what happens in the aesthetic experience; it determines, in other words, the very structure of the aesthetic experience, for in this event the art work as a sensuous (or imaginary) form is not only the ontological basis of the experience but also an essential ingredient of it. It provides the material and direction of the aesthetic experience.

What Makes an Experience Aesthetic?

Or, under what conditions does an experience acquire an aesthetic character? Some aestheticians (Kant, Schopenhauer, Vivas, Stolnitz, Bullough) have argued that the principle of aesthetic distinction, that is, the aesthetic-making fact, or the fact that makes or entitles a quality or an object to be aesthetic, is the manner, interest, vision, or attitude by means of which we approach and perceive an art work. As given to sense-perception the art work is simply an ordinary, or natural, object which we may classify or identify historically, archaeologically, religiously, psychologically, or perhaps artifactually, but it is not aesthetic; it becomes aesthetic, and we may refer to it as such, only if or when we perceive it in a certain way, and this certain way means assuming what is generally known as the aesthetic attitude. The differentia of this sort of attitude is disinterestedness; that is, an object becomes aesthetic when I perceive it under the conditions of disinterestedness, i.e., objectively — without any ulterior motives, for its own sake, for what it has to offer as a unique object. An experience had under the conditions of disinterestedness is an aesthetic experience. But this theory of what makes an experience aesthetic has been subjected to devastating criticism during the past three decades; for, if the aesthetic attitude is what makes an experience aesthetic, what makes the attitude itself aesthetic? Can we characterize an attitude, which is a mental disposition, by a predicate such as "aesthetic?" Can we assume an aesthetic attitude toward evil or ugly objects?

It is more appropriate to hold that the principle of aesthetic distinction is *work as a significant form*, that is, as a complex of aesthetic qualities. The

realization of these qualities, i.e., their apprehension and enjoyment, in the experience of an art work (or a beautiful object) is what makes the experience of the work or object aesthetic. What is the mode of existence of these qualities? We should immediately grant that they are not given to our senses or imagination as ready-made realities but as potentialities, and as potentialities they exist in, and consequently belong to, the work of art. They become actual, under certain perceptual conditions, in the course of the aesthetic experience. And when I say "belong" I mean they originate from the art work; they are a function of its formal organization. Their identity, depth, and richness depend on the identity, depth, and richness, and richness of the art work as a significant form. The unity of these qualities constitute what we may call "aesthetic object." We should accordingly make a distinction between "art work" and "aesthetic object." An aesthetic object is the art work perceived aesthetically; and it is perceived aesthetically when a person actualizes in his or her experience the fullness of its aesthetic qualities. The medium of this actualization is the process of aesthetic perception.

Now in what sense does aesthetic quality "make" an experience aesthetic? I raise this question because one might assume, or imply, that "an experience" as a mental event can exist as an independent reality and that aesthetic quality acts on it in a certain way and so causes it to be or become aesthetic. This way of viewing the relationship between "experience" and "aesthetic quality" is naive and unwarranted, mainly because an experience-in-itself does not exist. An experience is always an experience of something; therefore, its identity is determined by the sort of object which actuates it. In daily life we are always engaged in doing something, mental or physical; the experiences we undergo constitute a stream of events. What distinguishes an experience from another in this stream is the unique quality—mood—which one enjoys as a value in having that experience. The point which merit special attention here is that experiences do not simply happen; they do not exist discretely. They are always the experiences of a person, a conscious subject, who presides over them and who organizes and can claim them to be his or hers.

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Aesthetic Experience: A Review

V. K. CHARI

The problem of aesthetic experience is twofold: (i) to establish that aesthetic experience is qualitatively distinct from nonaesthetic experiences, such as religious, sexual, etc., and (ii) to show that it is in some way relevant to critical discourse—to our analysis and appreciation of art works. Critical attitudes towards the concept have shown extreme reactions—from the one that denies that there is an experience called the aesthetic to that which says that it is useless to standardize it and talk about it, since it is altogether too subjective and variable to be of any use in our discourse concerning the arts. Contemporary aesthetics has, in fact, called in question the very notion of the "aesthetic" (Sparshott 1982, 467-86). The protagonists of aesthetic experience insist, however, that there is a peculiarly distinct sort of experience that arises only in the context of our encounter with aesthetic objects. Sure enough, there is some experience—experience, too, of a pleasurable nature—that we all derive from works of art and objects of nature, for otherwise, why would anybody attend to them at all? But then, there are difficulties in identifying and defining aesthetic objects. Artworks may be easier to isolate since they are the product of human intention and purpose, and they are often put out into the world with the label "art" attached to them. However, there are also a vast number of crafts or products of human skill that may be regarded as artworks—regarded, that is, for their perceptual interests. But can they be said to generate aesthetic experience? The case of natural objects is even more difficult to deal with. But inasmuch as some of them evoke feeling in use their identity as aesthetic objects has to be established purely in terms of the experience they evoke. Even accredited artworks do not produce the same kind or measure of response in all people, with the result that we do not seam to have a stable entity called aesthetic experience to talk about.

Be that as it may, we could still perhaps give a description of the kind of experience that some of us may be believed to derive from aesthetic objects and what happens in it. But we would have a hard time, purely in terms of it's internal properties, demarcating the boundaries between it and other related experiences, between one kind of pleasure and another. An easier way to distinguish it may be to start with the aesthetic object and define aesthetic experience as the kind of experience that arises from the object and that is appropriate to it. Since every experience must be an experience of something and there can be no experience without an object and since the content (and the character—pleasant, unpleasant, etc., too) of an experience is to a large extent determined by the nature of the object, it would seem to be the right step first to identify the aesthetic object before we discourse about the experience relating to it.

What then is an aesthetic object? This of course is a tantamount of asking "What is beauty?" "What is art?" — A question that has bedeviled philosophers over the ages and that proves to be particularly difficult in our age when any object whatever, any contraption or even a pile of junk items can be regarded as aesthetic objects provided they come with an institutional stamp or are backed up with a theory of art. However, for convenience, we may confine our discussion to those objects only that are widely agreed to be beautiful and worth while, and attempt an answer to the question in the following ways. The answer would range from the object-pole of the question to its subject-pole.

I. In objectivist terms, an aesthetic object may be defined as any object, natural or man-made, possessing certain qualities that arrest our attention and evoke in us a pleasurable or gratifying feeling that is marked out in some respects from other sorts of experiences. This is a view maintained by Beardsley, among others, although his theory is confined largely to artworks or intentional objects. For Beardsley, there is such a thing as an aesthetic point of view and an aesthetic experience, which can be distinguished from nonaesthetic experiences in terms of its own internal properties and which derives from an objective field of observation, namely, the artwork characterized by certain value-grounding qualities or aesthetic qualities. Corresponding to these "phenomenally objective" qualities are the "phenomenally subjective" features characterizing the aesthetic experience. A work of art, in his definition, is any perceptual (sensuously presented) or intentional (imaginatively intended) object that is deliberately regarded from the aesthetic point of view. The aesthetic point of view is not,

however, a special mode of perception but simply the capacity to perceive the various elements of the artwork "synoptically" in their mutual relationships.

II. In subjectivist terms, an aesthetic object is any object, natural or man-made, to which we bring a special kind of attention—different from ordinary kinds in that it focuses on the object for its own sake and not for any practical/ utilitarian reasons. This is the root take by the "aesthetic attitude" theorists from Kant down to our own time, although these theorists would seen to assume that the object must, in some unspecified way, be worthy of contemplation in virtue of its qualities.

Now, the first approach assumes that qualities are phenomenally object and hence available for critical analysis. The second makes the perception of an object as an aesthetic object dependent upon the percipient's adopting a particular attitude towards it. The aesthetic is a mode of perception, not an aspect of the object. On this view, any material thing whatever—a blackbird or a wheelbarrow—is, at least theoretically, capable of becoming an object of aesthetic appreciation. III. An attempt to mediate dialectically between the two poles is that of the phenomenologists—Ingarden, Dufrenne, Iser, etc., (ignoring marginal differences)—an approach that is consistently applied to aesthetic questions ably defended by Mitias (1988 A, 1988 B). According to this, the putative aesthetic object becomes so both in virtue of certain qualities or properties possessed by it and the perception of the percipient which, in several ways, compliments, contributes to, and thus constitutes the object of appreciation. In dialectical terms, there is first the artwork which, mediated by perception, emerges as an aesthetic object. A distinction is made here between what are strictly the material, objective features of the art object and the perception of them as value-grounding qualities or aesthetic qualities, between the artwork and the aesthetic object (a distinction also observed by John Dewey). The aesthetic object is then, on this view, both objective and subjective in terms of its ontic status. While the complete idealist would say with Coleridge that "We received but what we give, " the phenomenologists would go with Wordsworth in saying that we "half receive and half create."

Several problems emerge out of this brief profile of views on aesthetic experience; first, a definition of the aesthetic object and it ontic status: second, a clarification of the terms "aesthetic qualities," "aesthetic values," "aesthetic point of view," and "aesthetic attitude": and finally, an examination of aesthetic experience or "aesthetic emotion" and its psychological lineaments.

I. The aesthetic object; its mode of existence

The problems involved in this concept are; is an aesthetic object an object out in the world as any other object, ready made an found, or does it become so under certain perceptual conditions? If the latter is the case, then, what precisely is the nature of its transformation from one condition to another, or in other words, what was it before, and what is it after, the transformation? And again, is there a real metamorphosis of the object? A material change in the object under any perceptual conditions is of course inconceivable. Hence the change can only be in the viewers perception, under ideal conditions of observation, and validated inter-subjectively. But perceiving an object as an aesthetic object required not merely certain perceptual conditions, but also innate capacity in the perceiver to recognize or project, as the case may be, the aesthetic character of the object—since any object by itself is a neutral entity and can be viewed in nonaesthetic ways or put it alien uses. This capacity may be one that is acquired through training and cultivated or it may be a distinct faculty called "taste" (in terms of faculty psychology), or a disposition in the humans to appreciate whatever is aesthetic about an object. In any case, unless the perceiver is the kind that takes interest in nature or in art objects and brings to them the proper attention these things will not be seen as aesthetic objects. Much depends then on the perceiver or connoisseur (*rasika* or *sahrdaya* in Sanskrit). It is in and by his perception that a non-aesthetic object—that is, an object that was not aesthetic before—is transformed into an aesthetic object. But this transformation is not a real event in the world; it is an appearance. The fog in the sea, the painting, the piece of music or whatever remains just what it was before I perceived it as aesthetic or discovered in it, or projected onto it, some special significance or value. This conclusion is implicit in the aesthetic attitude theory. Even according to Beardsley's "aesthetic point of view" theory, it is only when an object is viewed from that point of view that it will be recognized as an aesthetic object and will come to light in its own character. Here of course the implications that the object is that the object was already aesthetic (remember that Beardsley is talking about artkind instances mainly) and it is only perceived for what it is, whereas the aesthetic attitude theory assumes that the attitude alone does the whole work and posits the aesthetic object.

But here the question is whether anything that is not intrinsically what it is seen to be or regarded as can become what it is not except by an act of the creative imagination or delusional vision, in which a rope can be seen as a serpent,

inanimate objects humanized and profound meanings read into a sunset, trees, hills, and cataracts, as in Wordsworth's nature poetry. Natural objects, obviously not being aesthetic by intention (Arnheim's "weeping willow" is obviously a case of pathetic fallacy), need to be looked at with a special attitude or in a particular frame of mind in order that they may be regarded as aesthetic at all—regarded, that is, for their own sake, for the perceptual or imaginative pleasure that they are capable of yielding. The aesthetic attitude theory, as conceived by Kant, is based primarily on the model of mute natural objects which are innocent of any aesthetic purpose and which depend on the viewer's perceptual attitude or point of view to give them any significance aesthetically. And since the attitude is what confers aestheticity on the object, the object by itself has no role in the aesthetic experience. In this case then, the principle of distinction between the aesthetic and the nonaesthetic should be sought, not in the object, but in the interest taken.

But the same is not the case with intentional objects or objects that are deliberately designed as aesthetic objects or artworks. A poem, a painting, a sculpture, a piece of music, a building with decorative motifs, etc. has no other use to function than to be viewed aesthetically. Thee objects are deliberately put together in a purposeful manner so that their objective form alone, as an "embodied intention," should be able to reveal the purpose for which they are intended. Even where an artwork is expressly intended for some other purpose, such as religious or moral, in its own identity as a formal organization it is first an artwork and then, secondarily, and instrument of use: first a poem, then a message; first a sculpture, then a sacred image, and so on. Works of art are aesthetic objects in their own constitution and identifiable by certain built-in features—such as, formal devices, presentational or performance context, etc., which serve as markers. They do not, like natural objects, need the esemplastic imagination of the perceiver for their being what they are perceived to be. Hence Beardsley understands the term "aesthetic object" as synonymous with "work of art," but insists that unless one regards it from the aesthetic point of view one is not likely to see it for what it is—a demand that is justly made, because an artwork can go unnoticed qua artwork without the awareness of a percipient. It appears from this that the conditions of what is called aesthetic object are not the same in all cases, and that in defining it we have to draw a line between natural objects and man-made works that are expressly designed as aesthetic objects.

A further distinction is also necessary among the art objects themselves on the basis of the mediums in which they are embodied. While all art forms require an aesthetic point of view or sensibility to be fully apprehended for their significance, some of them call for the viewer's or percipient's own imaginative capabilities in a greater degree than others to provide them with any significance or meaning at all. Thus the verbal and dramatic arts—poems, plays, novel, stage drama, and expressive dance, and the visual arts of the representational type—are fully objective and autonomous in so far as their meanings are contained within their own formal bodies. These may be termed "self-expressive" as they all carry their meaning on the face—they are pictorial representations of objects, persons, actions, etc., or they employ signs—words, gestures, and movements expressive of inner feelings and thoughts. On the other hand, instrumental music, and among the visual arts, abstract painting and sculpture, and architecture depend, much like natural objects, entirely on the listener/viewer for their aesthetic significance to be realized, although they can be readily recognized by any person as art objects by virtue of their artifactuality. Even in the self-expressive category, no doubt, the meanings of shapes, words, gestures, and actions may not be readily apparent: there will be problems of interpretation and need for elaborate construal—filling the gaps, supplying of missing connections, drawing out the implications, etc. But such problems can be met successfully with the help of the well-known canons of interpretation and artistic conventions. At any rate, it should be admitted that the meanings of any human action, or handiwork in the self-expressive mode are utterly contained in the mediums in which they take form, although the perceiver too may have to exert his mind in interpretating them. But interpretation is always of a finished product, of a stable and reidentifiable entity, not of an "emergent" object.

The aesthetic attitude theory has no doubt come under fire from the objectivists. But there is something to be said for the basic premise from which it stems and which it shares with Beardsley's "aesthetic point of view," namely, that there are certain values that may fairly be called aesthetic and that people generally perceive in aspects of external and human nature, and in art creations, and that move them. Poets, painters, song writers, actors, dancers, and so on love to recreate such aspects in various ways in art mediums and the general public tend to appreciate them when they recognize them in artworks. Love of nature and the mimetic instinct are common to both the artist and the audience. An art object of the representational or self-expressive type may therefore be

said to consist of a representation of an object, situation, or any element or aspect of human perception, experience or consciousness that is of common human interest and that appears significant or arresting to the artist, who tries to capture it in a medium other than that in which it exists in nature (painting, poetry, sculpture, etc.), or in the same medium under simulated conditions, mimetically, that is—music, dance, acting. Some might even go so far as to argue that even nonobjective art must ultimately draw its categorical traits from natural or human models—colours, sounds, shapes, angles, and kinaesthetic elements. But we need not press this point for our present purposes. At any rate, when an object possessing certain discernible value-bearing qualities is sufficiently entrancing, then the aesthetic attitude or point of view plays its role: a disinterested attention will help active participation in and enjoyment of the properties of the object. But it is not often the case that one enters into an attitude volitionally in order to be drawn to the object. The object itself, if it is worth its salt, may be expected to dictate the kind of attention that is required for its appreciation.

II. Work of Art vs. Aesthetic Object: Aesthetic Qualities vs. Aesthetic Values

Let us now examine the distinction maintained by the phenomenologist between the work of art and the aesthetic object, setting aside the question of natural objects for convenience. This distinction is perhaps also implied by Beardsley's "aesthetic point of view" to the extent that it says that an art object must be seen from a certain point of view in order to be discovered for its aesthetic significance. The perception from the aesthetic point of view is simply a perception of those qualities in the object that are intrinsically interesting to humans—such as, harmony, balance, order, proportion, expressiveness, etc., which are regionally emergent qualities and which it is possible for anyone to see. This perception is thus anaesthetic quality (A-Quality) perception or "regional perception." But, as we noted above, Beardsley's A-Qualities are "phenomenally objective" and reside in the artwork; it is just that they are recognized as value-bearers from the aesthetic point of view. It follows from this that aesthetic perception is value perception.

For the phenomenologist, on the other hand, the work of art is but the material basis or "the perduring structural foundation" (Dufrenne, trans., xxiii), which can be put to any number of nonaesthetic uses, but which becomes metamorphosed into an aesthetic object when realized in perception. Its material character consists of paints, stone, sounds, or words, as the case may be, or lines, colours, figures, tunes, or meanings, when the same are formally organized. And

they become aesthetic through a specific act of perception and are contingent on that act for their aestheticity. The aesthetic character of the artwork, for Dufrenne, is its felt dimension or its affective quality, which is realized only in the consciousness of the spectator.

For Dufrenne then, neither the formal organization nor the expressed content of the artwork is yet aesthetic: the meaning of the poem, the melodic-rhythmic structure of the music, the representation in the painting or sculpture are still its sensory material body. They lack the "felt dimension" which alone makes them aesthetic objects. The aesthetic object has a double existence: as an art object and as an object aesthetically—that is, subjectively—realized. It is suspended between the formal/objective structure of the artwork and the subjective consciousness of the percipient, or better still, it is a *tertium quid*, a new reality or creation arising from the union of the two. The dialectical structure of this argument is obvious and it stems from the phenomenological premise that knowledge is at once sub-objective or inter-involved. The identity of the object depends on a perceiving subject; there is no object without a subject.

This line of reasoning is applied consistently by Mitias to the question of aesthetic qualities, which, he observes, are the real principle of aesthetic distinction (Mitias 1988b). The aesthetic object, like any material object, may be broken down into a complex, or more accurately, a congeries of qualities or properties. But a distinction may be made, albeit arbitrarily, for our purpose, between the terms "properties," and "qualities," let us say, has objectivist implications: A property is what belongs to the object and what goes into its constitution, whereas a quality—aesthetic quality, that is—in the phenomenological view, is that property of the object which is perceived as being aesthetic, i.e. as having aesthetic value. Mitias does not make this distinction, but it is implied in his argument throughout. Discussing the ontological status of aesthetic qualities. He argues that aesthetic qualities are not readymades or the objective properties of the work, but that they "emerge in perception" as values (1988b,29). The contemplative look on the face of da Vinci's *A Musician*, the sadness of *Valse Triste* by Siblius, or the tragicalness of *Anna Karanina*, or the look of peace and dignity on the face of Vermeer's *Kitchen Maid* are not altogether in the work although they are anchored in it and determined by its material medium, its ontic base. They are there only as potentialities to be actualized or realized as values in the perceiver's consciousness. Consequently they have their locus in aesthetic perception. The

objective properties of the work are, on the other hand, such things as the bright patch of colour representing the flood light streaming through the window in the *Kitchen Maid*, the organized notes in a musical piece, or the linguistic structure and the described events of *Anna Karanina*—and they form the physical base for the perception of the corresponding aesthetic qualities.

At this point it will be instructive to probe a little into the question of aesthetic qualities. A review of the scholarly discussion on the subject will reveal the following (Beardsley 1982; Hermeren): (i)Aesthetic qualities (A-Qualities) or aesthetic attributions are not all of the same type: Some are evaluative and others are descriptive or objective properties perceived as value-grounding or VG qualities, while yet others are variable depending on the circumstances. (ii) Some may be attributed literally to artworks, while others (affective or purely value-based terms) are imputed to artworks and can only apply to them by metamorphic extension. (iii) An A-Quality must be some aspect of the object that is perceived as a value or as being capable of providing aesthetic gratification. An aesthetic value may be defined as any property of an object that is held to be a source of contemplative pleasure to a perceiver and that bears repeated contemplation.

Thus, qualities like "delicate" (meaning, having thin fine lines or contours), somber (dark—of colours and landscape), vivid—are phenomenally objective or descriptive properties. "Unified," "coherent," "complete," "Balanced," "tightly knit," "harmonious"—are gestalt or structural or "regional" qualities. "Tragic," "joyful," "serene," "solemn," "sad," "cheerful,"—are emotion qualities or expressive qualities, perceived directly in art forms of the self-signifying type (literature, figurative painting and sculpture, expressive dance and stage acting), but imputed to pure music, landscape, and nonobjective painting and sculpture, in the nonself-expressive medium. "Bold," "nervous," "tense," "impatient," "relaxed," "restless," are behaviour qualities, ascribed metaphorically to artworks. "Shocking," "stirring," "funny," "trite," "boring," "beautiful," "impressive," are reaction qualities and value-loaded, and designate affective responses to artworks. They are applied metaphorically to art works.

It also follows from (iii) above that the so-called A-Qualities—whether objective or purely evaluative/affective—are aesthetic values, perceived as such by a viewer or a community of viewers. Value perception takes someone to discover for himself the values in things. Aesthetic judgement is then necessarily a judgement of values, and to that extent it may be allowed that the percipient

plays an active, creative role in the perception. He interprets the qualities residing in the object as value-bearing and capable of yielding aesthetic enjoyment. And these qualities should include, not only the formal qualities of the medium, like colours, shapes, and sounds, but also the representational elements—meanings, pictures, and the like. What then are potential in the object and are "actualized" in the perceiver's consciousness are aesthetic values, not the value-bearing properties themselves. Values come into being in and by the act of perception. An observed property, when seen as a value, becomes an aesthetic quality. As an event in consciousness, an aesthetic quality cannot be deemed to belong to the artwork. What belongs to the artwork is some perceptible property—visual, auditory, or cognitive (perceived as meaning). While thus all values depend on a perceiver for their realization, there seem to be different degrees of this realization and different ways in which it is effected. In some art forms, the values themselves may be said to be given in some sense and not merely perceived. In the case of the verbal and dramatic arts, and in other forms of the self-expressive medium, qualities like "sad," "cheerful," "comical," etc. are descriptive properties. The art form consists of them. Moreover, these may be, not only objective properties, but also the values expressed by the work. The tragicalness of *Hamlet* or *King Lear*, the serenity on the face of the Buddha image, the erotic gestures and movements of a dancer are palpably manifested in the work as values. They do not emerge in perception or await actualization by the percipient. They are there insofar as they can be expressed at all, in life or in art. Perceiving the look of peace on the face of an actual person is the same as perceiving it on the face of a painted image of him, except that the latter is an imitative reproduction or representation. We just see it for what it is, recognizing it by its tokens.

But, can they still be said to be expressed as values by the work itself? The tragicalness (pity and grief) of *King Lear* is a feeling registered by Lear and other characters in the play. But it is not a "pleasure-yielding" aesthetic value to them: it is an insufferable condition. The spectator, however, takes pleasure in reliving and empathizing with that condition and hence it is a value to him. Similiariy, the look of agony on the face of Christ in a crucifixion painting. On the other hand, the joy of reunion of lovers in a romantic comedy drama is a valuable experience both to the characters and the spectator, who is happy in their happiness. Buddha's serenity, if you know his story, was a value to him, which he cultivated and, presumably, also relished, and hence a value in the

imaged person in that the image exhibits it. The erotic behaviour of a dancer or stage actor is even more manifestly an "expressed value," a valuable experience equally to the performer and the spectator. In such cases, we can say that the already actualized affective values of the artwork are simply replicated or reverberated in the consciousness of the spectator. You feel what Buddha felt, or more accurately, what the image "feels," in a manner of saying. But here one could make a hair-splitting distinction and say that the feeling felt by the spectator is not the same raw emotion that is expressed by the character or exhibited in the image. What the spectator feels is "aesthetic emotion" (*rasa*, in Indian poetics), and accordingly, one could give it a different nomenclature. While this may hold true of the disagreeable or painful emotions—like grief, anger, fear, disgust—which turn out to be pleasurable in life as in art. But are not even the disagreeable emotions—Lear's grief or Christ's agony—qualitatively the same as those felt by me when I identify with those characters—except that they are distanced and imaginatively recalled? A maxim in Sanskrit has it that the poetic or dramatic experience is the same for the poet, the hero, and the audience. However, you may wish to call these very distanced or "imagined" feelings "art emotions" and hence aesthetic values. But even so, they can be seen as already manifested in the work, at least in their substantial forms.

There is another sense in which aesthetic values may be said to be expressed by the artwork, not existing merely as a basis for potential realization. The artwork, as an illocutionary act, was made with the purport of conveying certain values—valuable insights or experiences—and it does so in the only way possible, namely, through the medium of the art form and the properties appertaining to it. The serene look of Buddha and the agony of Christ on the cross are the expressed content of the respective images—expressed through visible, objective signs—and at the same time they are the values purported by the expressions and found worthy of contemplation by the art lover. In the other self-expressive mediums too, the work occasions sad or cheerful feelings in the reader or spectator because the dancer, the actor, the speaker, the poet himself in his own person or his persona expresses those feelings. These feelings, when they are replicated or echoed in the reader's or spectator's consciousness are different from those expressed in the artwork only in the sense that they appear in a different substratum, where of course they will become intermixed with subjective elements. But they should still be deemed to remain unchanged in their qualitative essence. Otherwise, they could not even be traced back to the

work that endangered them, not to say that we can have a shared experience of them.

These affective values, it may be admitted, are "realized" in their affective depth only in the experience of the percipient. They are grasped from the artwork cognitively or perceptually (as the case may be) and then realized affectively. And in that sense, they are potential in the work. But they are potential only in the way that certain food values, like protein and vitamins, are said to be contained in certain varieties of food. The value of these elements is realized only wen the food stuff containing them is consumed and takes affect on the body. But what precisely is the nature of this realization in the case of art? The values conveyed by the artwork produce certain reactions in the perceiver—they evoke certain affective responses in him. It is the perlocutionary end of the communication act. Considered as communication, art is no different from other kinds of communication. Someone makes an art object for the purpose of evoking a certain response in the viewer. The viewer responds and has an aesthetic experience. Beardsley's theory supports such a causal explanation of aesthetic experience. The phenomenally objective features of the work of art (82). This being the case, the beholder's role consists only in recognizing the values residing in the form and content of the work and responding to them in wise passiveness. He does not have to reshape or in any way complement or complete the work, as the phenomenologist claims. The value of course takes effect in his consciousness, and in this sense it is potential in the art work, as it is in any cause-effect situation. But the artwork, as a meaningful structure, has discharged itself whether the response (perlocutionary effect) takes place or not, just as a command given is complete in its meaning whether the perlocutionary action ensues or not. Hence its objectivity.

In the nonself-expressive , nonobjective forms—music, architecture, abstract painting, abstract dance (if ever there was such a thing)—the values cannot be said to exist even as potentialities in any constant or definite way as they are not amenable to objective tests. There the sound structure, shape, mass, colour, steps, geometrical figures, etc. cannot be said to be value-bearers except (a) by convention, or (b) when regarded as intentional objects whose purport is to convey certain values—sheer perceptual pleasure or some arbitrarily imposed symbolic or expressive significance. Even so, in the absence of any specifiable signification, such as a title, declared theme, or narrative context, one cannot say that aesthetic qualities or values, like sadness, cheerfulness, etc. "emerge"

out of the formal elements of these arts. Thus the sadness of a musical piece is actually projected onto it and hence metaphorically ascribed, for the music has no potentiality to occasion sadness in the absence of an invariable relation to overt expressions of sadness. To say with Langer that it is iconic of forms of feeling (the appeal to inner happenings). However, it could arouse emotions in virtue of some formal features ("Contours," Peter Kivy calls them) that are isomorphic with features of behaviour expressive of them—such as, tonality, rhythm, tempo, etc. (the Bowasma thesis)—in which case, such features would be descriptive qualities or properties of the object, not "aesthetic qualities" arising out of the contact of the listener's consciousness with the object. The same argument holds for abstract dance. But the recognition of such values will be, to a large extent , contingent upon the listener's personal attunement and cultural exposure. An Indian audience would not be able to feel any deep appreciation for Western music or ballet, although they can still identify the sounds as music and the movements as dance movements. But non genuine aesthetic experience may be expected from such encounters.

In any case, it is only instances of the nonself-expressive category that the percipient has to add to the artwork, bringing to it experiential material from the storehouse of his consciousness. But in instances of the other category—in the self-expressive mediums—there is no need for supplementation by the imagination. Their meanings are contained in their forms. One perceives such objects, makes out their form and their meaning, and then one may be affected by them in some way. But the objective reality of the thing remains unchanged. There is no interinanimation or cooperative effort between the art object and the percipient.

But here the phenomenologist may point out that what the words of a poem, the gestures and actions of a performing artist, or the representation in a painting may be said to contain is only an "ideal signification" (Dufrenne, 218) or a "schema" (Mitias 1988b,32), not the sensuous body of the experience itself, and that in this sense the aesthetic object is realized and "completed in the consciousness of the spectator" (Dufrenne, 204). There is the objective reality of the artwork and then there is the subjective content which the work stirs up in the mind—emotions, images, memories, sensations—the effects that bring the object to life as an aesthetic object. Here we must remind ourselves that any artwork or any act of expression , for that matter, in the verbal, physical, or plastic medium can go only so far and not hand over experience in the body. It

can only be a schema. Moreover, the meaning of any sign or sememe (meaning-bearing entity) comes to light only when there is an uptake. But the meaning is always there, situated in its context, whether someone decodes it or not. But this is not the sense intended by the phenomenologist. The meaning, he would say, acquires its identity in being experienced. However, the case of the dramatic arts—stage acting and dance—which are in the action medium—is somewhat different. There the contents of the experience are presented directly and immediately as a live spectacle, as a "happening," not merely as a schema. So much so that the audience has only to vibrate in sympathy or relive the event empathetically. Even so, no doubt, the manner of realizing the spectacle will vary from individual to individual, each person bringing to his experience a wealth of meanings drawn from his personal psyche and his cultural frame of reference. But over such subjective reactions the art object has no control. Much less do these reactions form part of the meaning of the work. For all meaning, or all that is supported by a semantics—a sign-signifie, expresser-expressed (*vacya-vacaka*, in Sanskrit) relation—is by definition limited and definite. The elaborations or extensions of meaning, imaginative and conceptual proliferations, that a Mona Lisa or a poem by Keats may spur in the mind of a person with a fertile imagination, although they no doubt my flow from the object, cannot with any justice be called the meaning of that object. No doubt, too, that invariably the object is realized in this subjective fashion and is, in the process, enriched by what the individual adds to it in terms of his own constructive imagination. But I should argue that all this does not strictly fall within the bounds of what the work itself purports to convey. At any rate, the spectator cannot be said to be "constituting," or "completing" the aesthetic object through his act of perception. He can only be extending its meaning, value, or significance. For the work itself, as a finished product—whether a poem, a play, a picture, or a dance—contains its own significance, is self-complete and self-revealing (inasmuch as any such thing can be said to be) even without the mediation of the spectator's consciousness. Hence its objectivity, its autonomous status.

We have seen that an artifact—regardless of whether it is completely objective or partly actualized in consciousness—is distinguishable from the rest of the phenomenal world by virtue of its artifactuality. It is either an imitative reproduction of nature or a formulation, shaping, or organization of its elements (categorical traits), or an expression of ideas and feelings in a conventional

medium, although many other artifacts (machines, tools, etc.) would also qualify for this designation. But is the experience generated by it so distinguishable from other kinds of experiences? It has been argued by the critics of aesthetic experience and aesthetic attitude that art is continuous or coextensive with like, that there are no elementary aesthetic interests or emotions, and that all the interests, emotions, and urges that prompt people in real life appear in art as well. However, something like an aesthetic interest or aesthetic sense can perhaps be isolated from other life interests—from the utilitarian, heuristic, religious, intellectual and the like. First, people enjoy making pictures of things or producing imitations of objects and actions. This is Aristotle's mimetic instinct. Second, they like to create shapes, make formal patterns of objects, sounds, movements, weave structures of different kinds, and so on. This is Aristotle's instinct for harmony and rhythm. Third, they also like a pleasurable exercise of their emotions, what Hazlitt called "gusto" (*rasa*, in Sanskrit), or an excitation of their senses by colours, sounds, and the like. Fourth, there is the instinct for ornamentation (alamkarana, in Sanskrit), which is amply demonstrated by all sorts of decorative motifs appearing in traditional architecture—temples, churches, and mosques—and on images, and by costumes, jewelry, and the like, which serve no other function than simply beautifying the appearance of things and persons. In both Indian and Western poetics, rhetorical figures are held to be ornamental additions to the poetic idea, a means of enhancing the meaning. Artistic activity as well as aesthetic appreciation may be traced to these urges. There is no need to explain the whys and wherefores of this phenomenon. So one can conclude that there is a thing called pure aesthetic value that is distinct from practical, theoretical, and other values. And if there is such a value, the experience resulting from the pursuit or contemplation of it must also be distinct from experiences resulting from other sorts of activities and objects. Aesthetic activity may be called a self-rewarding activity or play, and an end in itself. But this feature of the aesthetic experience may not be a sufficient condition for its being a distinct kind of experience, since there are evidently many other activities—games and sports, for example—there are also self-rewarding, in which case, we can only say that aesthetic activity is but part of a larger family of autotelic activities. Besides, as pointed out by Dickie and other objectors, one may not value an art object for its aesthetic interest alone. The aesthetic interest may coexist with the practical, acquisitive, intellectual, and other interests. While this may be granted, it is possible to argue that, in its purest

state, albeit maybe for a short duration, the aesthetic interest can be isolated and that the quintessential function of the object that provokes that interest is to gratify that aesthetic in the viewer, and not to provide some other kinds of satisfaction.

In nay case, it is necessary to outline the character of this experience before we can make out a case for it in terms of its possibility and worthwhileness. Contemporary discussions of this subject have generally followed Beardsley's formulation—which has its source in the tradition of Kant and Schopenhaver. According to Beardsley, the five characteristics or "internal properties" of aesthetic experience are: object-directedness, felt freedom, detached affect, active discovery, and wholeness. Attentional focus on the aesthetic object, disinterestedness and psychical distance, and the consequent freedom from mundane concerns are also common to the phenomenological and aesthetic attitude theorists. Both Beardsley and the phenomenologist also emphasize the affective character of this experience. But for Beardsley, the affective element is strictly under the control of the perceptual elements of the artwork.

Much the same account can be heard from the ancient Indian theorists, chiefly Abhinavagupta whose formulations of the "Rasa" theory, following Bharata's *Natya-sastra*, have been taken as canonical over the ages (*Abhinava Bharati*, I & VI). Although the rasa experience is generally equated with aesthetic experience by scholars, it must be noted that in its original intent it related mainly to poetry and stage drama and not to the plastic arts or even to music and dance in their abstract form, taken in isolation from the theatrical context. Poetry was considered separately as a verbal art and the theatrical spectacle was a mix of dialogue, action, song, and dance (both pure and expressive). The *rasa* experience was the total experience of the dramatic spectacle. Both Bharata and his commentators, including Abhinavagupta, recognize that music and abstract dance are powerful affective tools, especially in the theatre, but they argue that they possess no definite emotive significance as they have no semantic or cognitive content—a situation consisting of the objects and behavioural expressions of an emotion. In latter day literature, the *rasa* concept was applied to the figurative arts, namely, painting and sculpture (*citra* and *silpa*), and expressiveness was held to be of the very essence of the art of portraiture, as it was of stage acting and expressive dance. The association of music with *rasa* was taken as axiomatic though it was recognized that musical notes and tunes (*ragas*) had by themselves

no exact signification. Emotions can be expressed only in two mediums: speech (*vacika*) and bodily action and gesture (*angika*), which are self-signifying vehicles, while musical sounds, dance steps, and abstract figures have no expressive power of their own and are parasitic on the concrete emotive situation for their evocative function.

Understood in the context of the theatre—poetry too is a dramatization of the emotions, according to Abhinavagupta—*rasa* is an affective experience, not merely a cognitive perception. The primary object of art is not referential, to convey information or to yield any new knowledge, but to evoke pleasurable responses in the spectator. On the much debated question of whether aesthetic experience is a conceptual or a nonconceptual, nondiscursive state, the rasa theory maintains that the essence of this experience is an affective quality provoked in the artist as well as in the spectator by whatever is the subject matter of human experience—an object, person, thought, or situation. *Rasa* is an emotionalized perception of the world as opposed to the purely intellectual or theoretical. Representational art is no doubt made up of reference to objects and states of affairs. But mere referentiality or exemplification does not confer value on the art object (contra Goodman). What is aesthetically valuable can be determined only by the quality (specifically emotive quality)of what is referred to or exemplified. The *rasa* theory assumes that affective states (emotions or *bhavas*), like the tragic, the comic, the erotic, the serene, etc. are given a priori—they are embedded in human consciousness as latent traces or impressions, to be sparked into action at the least touch of their objects. (Cf. Dufrenne, 437-0439 on "aesthetic a priori.) *Rasa* experience is no doubt still a cognitive process—the instruments of empirical knowledge (*pramanas*) do operate in so far as it involves the construal of the data of the presented object or spectacle, and it draws upon sense perception, inference, and memory as in ordinary cognition. But the resultant of these processes is a pleasurable thrill termed *camatkara*, *spanda*, while the cognitive activity is the penultimate stage of aesthetic perception. In its ultimate stage of enjoyment, Abhinavagupta insists, *rasa* is a variety of apperception or self-reflexive activity, in which the mind oversteps all the cognitive baggage and rests in its own consciousness. Moreover, the objectively presented emotions are not so much cognized as they are "recognized" (cf. Dufrenne: *Ube reconnaissance*). In terms of his own idealistic epistemology, Abhinavagupta holds that all knowledge is a recognition of the world as oneself.

If *rasa* can be called "aesthetic emotion" it is not, however, in the sense in which it is understood in Western aesthetics—a pure etherealized feeling, such as even the colours and lines of an abstract painting, or the sounds of a musical piece, or the figure, rhythm, and movement in an abstract dance are believed to evoke, an "art emotion" pertinent to the so-called aesthetic surface (as Clive Bell, Beardsley, Peter Kivy, and others would have it). The implication is that it is a full-blooded emotion of the ordinary sort (the "garden variety," if you like), but occurring in a characteristic way in the context of art (particularly in poetry and drama). That is to say that emotions like love, anger, fear, etc. are the very substance of the *rasa* experience, but they are experienced differently from emotions in real life owing to the peculiarity of the situation—call it the aesthetic situation—in which they occur, and they are all savoured, become objects of gustation in a way that they are not in real life. Love wonder, heroism, humour, and serenity, which are relished in real life, unlike fear, grief, anger, and disgust, are transformed in art even while retaining their own distinctive flavours. Even the disagreeable emotions are savoured when they are presented through the medium of art (cf. Aristotle). What differentiates life emotions from aesthetic emotions and bestows value on them is the fact that when they are artistically represented they are rendered relishable and capable of being enjoyed repeatedly (*punah-punar-anusandhanatma*). *Rasa* experience is a cognition tinctured by (*rusita-vikalpa-samvedanam*) and of the same nature as the mental states like joy and sorrow, which are the stuff of poetry and drama.

However, Abhinavagupta insists that the aesthetic emotion is distinct from life emotions and that it is of quite another order—unique and nonordinary (*alaukika*). And he adduces the following reasons on support of his claim:

(i) It is different from ordinary modes of consciousness as is not subject to obstacles, such as practical, utilitarian concerns, or a complete surrender to the objects of desire (*visayavesa-vaivasya*). It is also distinct from Yogic consciousness in which there is a complete turning away from sensuous objects. In the poetic or dramatic experience, on the other hand, the mind is entranced by the object, although it is not totally immersed in it, as in some blind appetite, but retains a degree of contemplative detachment , such that it enables one to turn the object over, so to say, and savour it. (cf. Dufrenne, 358.) *Rasa* experience consists of the relishing of the contents of the dramatic or other presentation.

(ii) One of the central tenets of the rasa doctrine is "Genrealizarion" (*sadharani-karana*). The dramatic or poetic emotions, presented as being undergone by the character or by the speaker in the poem in particular situations, take on a generic significance and are felt by the spectator/readers if they were his own. They are divested of their diectics (determinations of person, place, time, and gender) in the spectator's apprehension and enjoyed for their general human significance. The spectator has no thought of ascertaining the veracity of the events, for the events are departicularized in the spectator's cognition and freed of their ontic determinations. *Rasa* is simply the life emotion freed of its limiting factors. This generalization of the emotions, together with their situational setting, is due to the very nature of the context in which they are experienced, namely, a) the objects of the emotions are not those of the spectator, b) the characters undergoing the emotions are not related to the spectator in any intimate way, nor are they actual personages, but projections of human types. Similarly, the actor too is taken to be such a projection as the situation in which he is acting out his feelings through word, gesture, and movement is entirely fictitious. The lyrical voice of the poet, too, even if he were voicing the emotions actually felt by him, is in terms of the verbal presentation, that of an imaginal person. Thus the whole experience of poetry and drama is a visualization (*anuvyavasaya*) or imaginative projection. In other words, the very fictionality and distance of the poetic or dramatic situation will act as a bar to too close a personal identification with the presented persons and happenings. However, there is yet a degree of identification due to the power of sympathy, in which the spectator's own personal being is involved as if the events of the drama were happening to him. He imagines himself being in a similar situation with persons whose lives touch him most intimately. This peculiar state of mind during the experience of the drama is described by a commentator as follows: "This is another's (experience); no, this is not another's, this is mine. No this is not mine. Here in the savouring of the events of the drama, no such discrimination exists."

The dramatic or the poetic situations therefore necessarily distanced from the practical or personal concerns of the spectator. The poem or play does not convey any specific injunctions to the spectator as to his actions or duties. Its emotions too are generalized in the way mentioned, so as to prevent wrong identification. The mechanics of the stage presentation, together with the various theatrical conventions will also aid the necessary "break with reality" so that the

spectator becomes immersed in the world of the drama to the extent that all his worldly interests and concerns are suspended for the time being. Hence Abhinavagupta calls the dramatic experience other-worldly. This is how "disinterestedness" and "aesthetic or physical distance," which are a necessary, if not a sufficient, condition of aesthetic experience, are to be understood. In terms of the *rasa* theory, aesthetic detachment is detachment, not from human concerns, as Dickie understands it, but from concerns of a practical or immediately personal nature. The pleasure of *rasa* experience is born of our deep involvement in matters of life that are equally our own and of the rest of the world, but appearing at a remove from actual life because of the assumed otherness and imaginariness of the presentation. There is the awareness in the spectator back of his mind that the whole drama is an imaginative exercise or play. As Dufrenne put it, the world of the artwork is "derealized" by its being a representation of the real world (360).

Abhinavagupta maintains that the *rasa* experience is, in the ultimate analysis, a subjective event—the locus of the experience is the spectator's consciousness, which is a repository of all kinds of memories and residual traces, so much so that what the spectator savours is his own consciousness, the artwork merely serving to awaken it. But he says there is also a sense in which the *rasa* is in the poem or play, since it is the emotive apparatus presented in it that is the basis for delucidation and the object of contemplation. Also, the *rasa* experience lasts only as long as contemplation is fixed exclusively on the object with no sense of cause and effect. The objective presentation is thus inextricable from that state, although what is objectively presented is quickly internalized and assimilated into the subjective consciousness or appropriated to the self, with the result that the subject-object distinction seems to disappear for the moment. Abhinavagupta characterizes this as the "state of being filled with the (aesthetic) object" (*tanmayibhava*), in which the object blossoms in the consciousness like some wonderful flower (*adbhutpuspavat*).

Several features of this account of *rasa* may suggest resemblances to the phenomenological account of aesthetic experience, especially in its emphasis on the affective character of the experience and its freedom from ontic determinations, and in its focus on the consciousness of the reader/spectator. But the important difference is that the *rasa* theory does not conceive of the aesthetic object as in any way being a creation or "emergent" of the percipient's consciousness. The sense of "thatness" is never lost in the experience. The

work of art itself is an entirely accomplished thing, the experience being in the nature a re-envisioning or re-enactment (*anusandhana*). The poetic or dramatic emotions are those that are brought into being by the poem or play (*kavyena bhavyante*). Abhinavagupta no doubt writes elaborately about the deeper dimensions of the *rasa* experience, waxing lyrical on its blissful nature. But he never forgets for a moment the objective character of the thing that gives rise to that experience. While he maintains the uniqueness and other-worldliness of the experience, he comments that as the *rasa* excitement of the spectator is inconstant and variable, the work has to be judged only by its objective presentation as this is only fit for discourse. Abhinavagupta would thus fully agree wit Beardsley's emphasis on the object-directedness of aesthetic experience as well as wit the other criteria laid down by him, such as unity, felt freedom, and detached affect. Both these critics are one in stating that aesthetic experience is a derivative of an already completed aesthetic object. Its course is dictated by the object. The object itself must of course possess some virtues, must be sufficiently enticing in order that it may cause in the qualified viewer the experience appropriate to it. Thus, is first the initial perceptual/imaginative hook-up, then the disinterested attention, then the cognitive, analytic discrimination of the objective properties, followed by the enjoyment of the object in a synoptic perception, although these stages may not always seem perceptible.

But neither Abhinavagupta nor Beardsley succeeds in showing that these features of aesthetic experience are sufficient to differentiate it from other experiences marked by a measure of intensity, such as religious or sexual ecstasy. In fact, Beardsley admits that experiences with an aesthetic character may be found to overlap with other kinds (292). Some of Abhinavagupta's critics raised the same objection. Again, if, as Beardsley argues, the experience and the object share the same set of features, although in two different existential modes (one being phenomenally subjective and the other objective), what is the use of elaborating on the subjective field, especially when the concern of the critic and the aesthete is with the objective features of the work rather than with what happens when he encounters an art object? Abhinavagupta too does not work out a satisfactory justification for his excursions into the mystique of *rasa* experience, except that he seems to suggest that art experience should be held in the highest esteem as it is comparable to the supernal joy of realizing the supreme reality (Brahman or the world-soul).

The attempt to show the interdependence of the phenomenally objective and phenomenally subjective aspects of the aesthetic encounter comes from the phenomenologist. But even he, as I have shown above, fails to account for the autonomous character of art objects that are in the self-signifying mode. The phenomenological approach would work well with the natural objects and art forms in the nonself-expressive mode depend on the percipient's realization for their status as aesthetic objects, he runs against the common perception of their givenness, their objective character. The argument that the aesthetic object is objective in some respects and subjective in others is at best dubious epistemology. In trying to ensure a place for the reader/perceiver in the aesthetic encounter, the phenomenologist may be guilty of wanting to eat his cake and have it too!

It cannot of course be denied that there is an aesthetic kind of experience that is intrinsically gratifying and that people derive from art works. But this experience can vary in intensity depending on individual taste and sensibility, and on the nature of the art form—some people find greater excitement in drama, music, and dance than in painting, and so on. It is doubtful, too, that all art forms are capable of generating the same sort of excitement that Abhinavagupta attributes to the dramatic arts, or even that the experience generated by them is of the affective kind at all. Some artworks, like an abstract painting or a musical elaboration performed by an Indian virtuoso, will provoke a critical/analytic awareness in the connoisseur rather than a profound affective experience. One might, however, say with Beardsley that in such cases the sense of active discovery—of form and meaning—is the reward. But then, such discoveries or "eureka" experiences are common to nonaesthetic situations as well. Again, as Dickie and others have argued, artworks may be valued for many reasons—for cognitive, moral, and other values—not only for aesthetic pleasure. But it can still be maintained that in most cases—in dance, portrait painting, music, and arguably in literature too, pleasure rather than information is the immediate aim of art. However, pleasurability cannot be used as a criterion of aesthetic merit because it is not accessible to critical analysis; there are no tools to measure it. What it all boils down to is that aesthetic experience is a subjective matter and known only by acquaintance—it must be felt in order to be known. Therefore the Indian theorists appeal to its introspective validity and aver that, in the ultimate analysis, *rasa* is its own proof (*svatah-pramana*) like direct perception, and beyond the limits of discourse. (It is perhaps best to keep it that way!)

The real issue then is not whether there is an aesthetic experience, but what its usefulness is for critical discourse. In evaluating artworks, we no doubt judge their goodness in terms of their efficacy to communicate a valuable experience, and we judge certain artistic devices or compositional features for their effectiveness in delivering specific effects. It may also be granted (contra Dickie) that unity and its family of related qualities, dependently or independently valuable in works of art, can be predicated of aesthetic experience, although they are not exclusive to it. But they can be taken as axiomatic and artworks analyzed in terms of them, without having to expatiate on their effective or phenomenally subjective counterparts, even as the laws of identity, noncontradiction, unity of meaning, and so on are the norms in logic and semantic analysis, but one does not dwell on the states of mind corresponding to these objective features. Thus, in saying that a poem or a play is unified, has a complex organization, or that it exhibits emotional tension one has said it all. The corresponding affects at the subjective level may be expected to follow. Since any talk about the phenomenally subjective features will only push us back into the work, the work alone ought to be our concern, first and last. Here one must agree with Dickie.

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Nishida and Santayana on Goethe
An Essay in Comparative Aesthetics

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Introduction

This essay is concerned with the reactions to the work of Goethe of two major philosophers from opposite sides of the world, Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945) and George Santayana (1863-1952). It is unsurprising that each should find a great deal of philosophical and of aesthetic interest in Goethe: what is more illuminating from the standpoint of comparative aesthetics is the difference in their reactions. They differ in the focus of their interest; in what they find valuable in his work and to a considerable extent in the works on which they concentrate. Moreover, these differences are the reverse of haphazard. As one might expect of these philosophers, both concerned to develop as complete and systematic a possible an account of reality in their philosophies, their aesthetics is firmly grounded in their world-view as a whole. Indeed, though no single contrast of this kind can ever give the whole story - the world is never that neat or simple- their approaches do to a certain extent exemplify some consistent differences between eastern and western approaches to aesthetics. In what follows I will set out in outline their respective metaphysics and general views on art and then in more detail their views on Goethe. Throughout I will touch on various points concerning the nature of aesthetic experience, both of the artist and the spectator (or auditor etc) of art, and will return to this issue in more detail in the conclusion.

(2) Metaphysics and General Views on Art

Nishida's whole philosophical endeavour throughout his entire career is unified by an intellectual project of exceptional daring, namely to try to find a way of conceptualizing zen experience. His bedrock conviction is always that ultimate reality is what is revealed in the zen experience of *satori*. Though he changed the conceptual frameworks he devised to articulate this outlook several

times, this root conviction is never questioned. In *satori* the surface ego - the self of which we are aware in all normal experience - disintegrates revealing the true self, and this true self or original face is identical with the universe. Using the vocabulary of Western philosophy, reality appears to satisfy the contradictory descriptions of being one and many simultaneously, a point Nishida insists on right from his first important work, *An Inquiry into the Good (Zen no kenkyu,* 1911*)*: "The fundamental mode of reality is such that reality is one while it is many and many while it is one...Since these two cannot be separated, we can say that reality is the self-development of a single entity." [1] If reality is a single entity, it follows that what we ordinarily take to be our true self, distinct from all that is the not-self, cannot be so, and that - as has been indicated - our true self is reality itself: "Our true self is the reality of the universe, and if we know the true self we not only unite with the good of humankind in general but also fuse with the essence of the universe and unite with the will of God - and in this religion and morality are culminated."[2]

Metaphysical convictions of this kind often incline those who hold them towards a particular style of view of the artistic creative process; the imagination; the role of the artist and the nature and function of art - I say 'incline' because the relation is not always one of entailment, but rather one of logical coherence of views.[3] Where ultimate reality is conceived of as a oneness, it tends to be the case that aesthetic experience is regarded as a significant or privileged mode of access to the ultimate. The artist, with the gift of genius or a special type of imagination, is generally described as having the ability to penetrate the veil of ordinary experience and of being able to show us the way to this same insight. Art then comes to be conceived of as having a profound role as a bearer of metaphysical or religious truth (insofar as these are distinct in these systems). This style of outlook was adopted, for example, by most of the major English romantic poets [4] and it was also adopted, with appropriate modifications, by Nishida. Though remarks about art in general occur throughout Nishida's works, there is a helpfully concentrated discussion in *Art and Morality (Geijutsu to dotoku,* 1923*)*. This work falls in the second phase of Nishida's philosophical development: in the first phase, of which *An Inquiry into the Good* is typical, Nishida uses a concept he borrowed from William James and Wundt to describe the ultimate, this concept being pure experience. In the second phase, in an attempt to avoid psychologism and under the influence of Fichte's notion of an act

(Tathandlung), he describes the ultimate in terms of the concept of the free act which underlies all acts.

Nishida summed up his key assertions concerning art and aesthetic experience in a short essay he wrote as a preface to an edition of Max Klinger's *Painting and Line Drawing* : " Art is neither a mere description of reality nor a mere subjective fancy. The so-called real world is not the only world given to us. Indeed, the world constructed by such a concept must rather be said to be the mere surface of reality. In the back of such a world is the flow of a truer reality, filled with a larger life whose depths cannot be fathomed. Precisely this reality is the object of art, and this aesthetic world, like our life itself, is infinitely free and profoundly rich."[5] Accordingly, aesthetic experience is not to be regarded as simply an interlude in our contact with the real world as ordinarily conceived, an experience in which we adopt a reflective, distanced or contemplative stance toward an aesthetic object of some kind. By contrast, aesthetic experience is experience of the ultimate, or put another way, of the true self which is the universe: ".. we attain to an even deeper self-consciousness in aesthetic intuition than we do in mere conceptual self-consciousness. It is an error to think that aesthetic intuition is unselfconscious or nonconscious in a sense similar to perceptive consciousness. In aesthetic intuition we transcend the plane of conceptual self-consciousness, include it internally, and truly attain to self-consciousness of the free self."[6] It follows that the creative activity of the artist is among the most extraordinary of all activities. To create in this way is to be in contact with the ultimate, the reality underlying the world of nature: hence Nishida can say, strikingly: "The act of creation is not an act in the natural world." [A&M, p.161] Or again, in Kantian terms: "the artist lives within things in themselves."[8]

It is appropriate to note further a point which Nishida does not make explicitly but which follows from his metaphysic and which is taken for granted in what he has to say about Goethe. The one and the many are non-different: to use Nishida's phrase, they have absolutely contradictory identity (*zettai mujunteki jikodoitsu*).[9] Rightly regarded, therefore, ultimate reality is fully present in every particular. Just as for Blake the universe can be experienced via a grain of sand, for Nishida anything, however small, transient or insignificant, can be the vehicle for the final insight into what there is. This ultimate insight is of something which is in the last analysis beyond description: as he put this point in the vocabulary of the third and last of the conceptual frameworks he devised that of the place of nothingness, *mu no basho*, nothing can be said of the ultimate: "it

has completely transcended the standpoint of knowledge, and may perhaps be called 'the world of mystic intuition', unapproachable by word or thinking." [10] However, it can be hinted at obliquely by an artist who can feel the ultimate in the particular and can so depict the particular as to direct our attention in the appropriate way. To do this does not require a long description or a detailed depiction: indeed detail and expansiveness will get in the way, perpetuating our condition of being trapped in the web of conceptual discriminations, a web which veils rather than reveals the truth. A short poem is all that is needed to direct us to ultimate truth. It is perhaps no accident that the *haiku* should have been so cherished in a zen-informed culture (and this is not to underestimate the purely linguistic reasons for its viability in Japanese): since the ultimate is fully present in everything - in the one hand as in the two when clapping - any thing or event, rightly understood, can indicate the way to the ultimate. This is an issue to which I will return later when dealing directly with Nishida's reaction to Goethe.

These are the general beliefs which inform Nishida's consideration of Goethe: it is now appropriate to set out the complementary beliefs held by Santayana.

Like Nishida in one respect, Santayana adopted certain major philosophical positions at the start of his career and, though he modified the conceptual structures he used to articulate them, these bedrock convictions remain invariant in his philosophy. Most fundamental among these are his materialism and epiphenomenalism: for Santayana reality is the material world as described by science, the mind being not a separate entity or type of substance but an epiphenomenon of matter. There is no spiritual somewhat behind the material universe, no realm to which we may penetrate in moments of privileged insight. What there is matter in a state of constant flux. We are of this world, because this world is all there is: "In truth..man is an animal, a portion of the natural flux; and the consequence is that his nature has a moving centre.." [11] There is no room in such a system for mysticism: knowledge is knowledge of nature, and it is gained via conceptualisation of the flux of experience and representational perception.

Granted such a framework, Santayana has to take a view of art, aesthetic experience, the artist, and the function of the imagination of a kind quite other from that offered by Nishida. Most of what Santayana has to say about Goethe he set out in works from the earlier part of his career, from the period in which he elaborated his first philosophical system in the five volumes of *The Life of*

Reason (1905-6), and so it is necessary to say briefly what this work is about. As is also the case with Nishida's *Inquiry into the Good*, Santayana's ultimate purpose in this work is an ethical one. In this period he adopts a variety of ethical eudaemonism: happiness is the good for humankind, and it is best achieved by adopting what he calls the life of reason, the life in which our various wants, needs and desires are harmonised by the use of reason. The latter takes its data from the lessons of experience, the chief lesson being that happiness can be achieved only by accepting the conditions which bound all human endeavour. *The Life of Reason* is a survey of human institutions - of which art is one - from the point of view of this eudaemonism. Of each the question is asked: does this institution, or this form of it, help or hinder humankind in its search for rational and harmonious happiness? [12] Art is justified only if in some way it helps us live more rationally, which for Santayana is equivalent to saying more happily. There is not space here to consider Santayana's views on each how each of the arts does this [13]: granted the subject in hand, it is necessary to focus on his views on poetry.

Throughout his career Santayana defines aesthetic experience, of both artist and spectator (using that term in a broad sense to cover reception of all the arts), as immediate experience. [14] He never makes the sense of this phrase in this context absolutely precise, though he clearly cannot mean that in aesthetic experience the flux of experience is entirely unconceptualised. Rather, what he appears to mean is that the special gift of the artist is to be able to break free of inherited conceptual habits, to be able to escape from the grip of pre-existent conceptual sets and to see things and experience in a fresh light, exhibiting their significance to us. He applies this view to the poet in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900). Great poetry - and the qualification is significant - he defines as "analysis for the sake of creation". [15] The great poet retains a certain innocence of vision, being able to disintegrate the conventionalities of humdrum experience, "and then out of that living but indefinite material to build new structures, richer, finer, fitter to the primary tendencies of our nature, truer to the ultimate possibilities of the soul. Our descent into the elements of our being is then justified by our subsequent free ascent toward its goal; we revert to sense only to find food for reason; we destroy conventions only to construct ideals." [16] No.

What Santayana is driving at becomes clearer if we concentrate on what these 'new structures' might be and how they are related to ideals, this last being a concept of central importance in his theory of poetry. Human beings are never

in perfect accord with their environment, both animate and inanimate. To be fully in accord with the environment would consist in that state in which the environment satisfied all human interests. We have concepts and beliefs which embody our notions of what this state of total accord would be like. They are our ideas of perfection, our ideals. Ideals cannot be the product of the understanding, since in Santayana's usage of the term the understanding is the faculty which most accurately records what is the case, rather than what we would prefer were the case. The faculty responsible for the production of ideals, Santayana argues, is the imagination, and indeed the formation of appropriate ideals he regards as its most important function.[17] To live without ideals Santayana regards as an abject failure of rationality: to live well we must live with them constantly in mind, otherwise we are adrift and directionless. Without ideals, "men would be horses harnessed to their own chariot, docile perhaps and hardworking, but neither knowing where they go, nor indeed going anywhere. All life in the world is also, if rational, life in the ideal..."[18] Moreover it is clear that for Santayana ideals are not to be regarded as logically isolated from one another: the life of reason demands that our ideal vision of life be comprehensive and inclusive, in effect that we have a complete set touching all the major areas of life. These sets of ideals are the new structures articulated by major poets.[19]

To live without regard for ideals, or to have few and fragmentary ones, is to be in the condition Santayana calls barbarism: "For the barbarian is the man who regards his passions as their own excuse for being; who does not domesticate them either by understanding their cause or by conceiving their ideal goal. He is the man who does not know his derivations or perceive his tendencies, but who merely feels and acts, valuing his life for its force and filling, being careless of its purpose and its form...his delight is in abundance and vehemence; his art, like his life, shows an exclusive respect for quality and splendour of materials. His scorn for what is poorer and weaker than himself is only surpassed by his ignorance of what is higher."[20] Barbarism in this sense Santayana regarded as a central feature of the Romantic outlook, a point to which I will return in more detail presently when dealing with his interpretation of *Faust*.

The working out and expressing of such comprehensive visions of the ideal is not easy and is not within the powers of the vast majority of human beings: those individuals who have the ability to articulate these visions are the supreme among the world's poets. They have an imagination powerful enough to articulate one of the few genuinely different world-views humanity has yet

devised. Santayana has four poets only on his list of those able to do this: Homer; Lucretius; Dante and Goethe. In their work is instantiated what he regards as the highest form of the art, rational poetry, i.e. poetry which helps us to live the life of reason. It may seem that what Santayana has termed rational poetry is in some cases philosophy rather than poetry; but in his view this distinction collapses at the highest levels of philosophical insight. In his view, philosophy is not to be confused with the technicalities which make up so much of it: such technicalities are merely the prelude to the final goal of philosophy which is *theoria* or contemplation, a vision of all things in their order and worth. Such contemplation is imaginative. A philosopher who attains it is for that moment a poet, and a poet who can grasp imaginatively the whole order of things is for that moment a philosopher.[21]

One basic point about the four poets on Santayana's list should be noted, namely that they are all the authors of long poems. A comprehensive vision, in Santayana's sense, cannot be stated briefly: the truth about the order of things is not quickly articulated: "Poetry must...to render all reality, render also the background of its figures, and the events that condition their acts. We must place them in that indispensable environment which the landscape furnishes to the eye and the social medium to the emotions. "[22] In great poetry, the subject is placed in its cosmic context: hence "The distinction of a poet - the dignity and humanity of his thought - can be measured by nothing, perhaps, so well as by the diameter of the world in which he lives; if he is supreme, his vision, like Dante's, always stretches to the stars."[23]

Nishida and Santayana, then, might both be said to accept the belief that one of the main values of supreme art is that it acquaints us with ultimate truth. The similarity between their views, however, is little more than verbal, since their conception of what that truth is could hardly be more different. With these ideas in mind we can now turn to their reactions to Goethe.

Nishida on Goethe

During the period 1895-1909, before he obtained his first university teaching post, Nishida was employed as a schoolteacher, and one of his principal responsibilities was to teach German. His own knowledge of the language he put to good use, not only mastering much classic German philosophy but also reading (amongst others) the works of Goethe. References to the poet are scattered throughout Nishida's works, from the period of *Zen no kenkyu* onwards. Right from the start, Nishida believed that he discerned in Goethe a metaphysical stance

akin to his own and more generally to that which he judges to underlie oriental art forms in general, a broadly holistic approach to a reality conceived in the terms already discussed. In Goethe's case, this outlook was native to him but considerably reinforced and rendered more articulate by his reading of Spinoza.[24] The general Spinozist approach Nishida sees behind Goethe's concept of the original phenomenon or *Urphänomen* held to underlie all phenomena. The ability to penetrate to this depth of reality is part of the special endowment of poets and *a fortiori* of Goethe. It consists in a special sort of intuition which penetrates to " the truth of a thing and grasp[s] its unifying reality. What they [i.e. poets] then express is not a superficial fact but an unchanging noumenal reality hidden deep within things."[25]

This approach to Goethe is developed at length in Nishida's most extended discussion of the poet, the essay *Goethe's Metaphysical Background*, written in December 1931 and published in *Thought and Experience: New Series* (1937). The term 'metaphysical' does not occur in the Japanese title, but the translator has entirely reasonably added it to the English title, since it is manifestly what Nishida has in mind. [26] In this essay, Nishida advances the view that the best of Goethe's poetry is informed by a world-view closely analogous to that which informs much oriental art. As has been noted above, since one and many are non-different or have absolutely contradictory identity, it follows that, in a sense, the ultimate can be said to be fully present in all things, and works of art are no exception. Put another way, Nishida notes that the real or ultimate is always present as the background to any work of art. Viewed as the one, the real is eternal, and so Nishida can say, again strikingly: "Just as Michelangelo's unfinished sculptures, or the sculptures of Rodin are hewn out of a massive block of marble, so all great art is a relief, cut out of the marble of eternity."[27] A relief, of course, is non-separable from the block from which it is carved; analogously, no work of art can be without a relation to the metaphysical background of the real.

This relation, however, may be more or less distant. The background of eternity is strongly present, Nishida contends, in Buddhist and early Christian art, whereas the perfect, highly articulated forms of ancient Greek art are less resonant of the depths of reality itself.[28] The real is in the last analysis beyond all conceptual articulation: no predicates apply to it. Accordingly, the more formless the background we discern behind (so to speak) a work of art, the closer we come to the real. Put in terms of spatial imagery, a two-dimensional

background is closer to the real than one which is three dimensional, since it more nearly approaches the formless: fewer predicates apply to the two-dimensional than to the three. Behind Goethe's lyric poetry Nishida discerns a two-dimensional background.[29]

It is important to highlight Nishida's isolation of the *lyric* poems of Goethe as the pinnacle of his output: though as we shall see he has things to say about *Faust*, it is the lyrics of Goethe which Nishida found came closest to his heart and to the poetry of the orient. This preference is rooted directly in his metaphysics. Ideally, art hints at or indicates to us the formless eternal one: "All this must be the reason why Goethe, despite his various talents and manifold activities, was the greatest lyrical poet. In the field of drama, where form and figure is essential, the background must be three-dimensional; only with regard to lyrics does one not know from where it comes, and to where it goes. It is an overflow of the spring of life. There is nobody but Goethe in whom personal experience has become poetry so directly." [30] In these lyrics there is a holistic view of the order of things deeply consonant with zen. Nature, in the lyrics, "is like an infinite space which, itself formless, produces form everywhere. Like the moonlight in *An den Mond*, like the sea in *Der Fischer*, and like the mist in *Erlkönig*, Goethe's 'nature' is essentially something that harmonizes with our heart.. There is *Mitklingen* [resonance] in the very depth of our soul."[31]

The thesis that nature and the individual are in harmony presupposes the reality of both, and that Goethe sensed this harmony, Nishida argues, sets limits to his Spinozism. The status of the individual in Spinoza's philosophy is problematic, and Spinoza's view was not acceptable to Goethe: "..Goethe was less a Spinozist than he himself believed, and less than many have said since. From a different point of view, one could even say that he took the opposite standpoint. In Spinoza's philosophy, eternity is two-dimensional, but negating the individual. Spinoza's 'substantia' negates the individual completely. In his philosophy, the individual is merely a 'modus' of the 'substantial'. There is nothing like 'time', and his philosophy does not allow for anything like individuality....On the other hand, Goethe's pantheism encloses individuality everywhere. Nature, in Goethe's sense, does not deny individuality, but produces something individual everywhere"[32], and this interpretation is certainly consonant with Goethe's view that a few exceptional souls achieve a form of immortality. From Nishida's point of view of course, Goethe's view is the more accurate,

since for him individuals are non-different from the real. Put another way: "the personal is an image of eternity, mirrored in eternity."[33]

Concerning *Faust* Nishida has two main points to make, the first concerning the overall message of the work, the key to which (he thinks) is to be found in how one views the Helena episode. What the drama as a whole exhibits, Nishida contends, is Faust's continued endeavour towards a higher state of existence. The Helena episode is a stage on this journey, necessary no doubt, but not the goal. The classic on its own is not enough: there is a higher ideal toward which Faust moves: "When Faust embraced Helena, only her veil and robe remained in his hands. He returned home and turned to an active life for the benefit of society. Goethe was thoroughly Germanic in his essence. The Goethe who wrote the second part of *Faust* and the *Wanderjahre,* was still the author of *Götz* and *Werther.* Although he was touched and refined by the spirit of the classical world, in the depth of his soul there was not the clarity of *eidos,* but a depth of feeling, to which the vision of ideas was not sufficient."[34] The perfect, fully articulated forms of Greek art, in Nishida's view, could not capture fully enough the imprecise but profound and inexhaustibly suggestive ideas and feelings which he takes to be the kernel of Goethe's experience.

Secondly, if the lyric poems best exhibit the formless background which is the real, it is in the final Chorus Mysticus at the conclusion of *Faust II* that Goethe makes his most explicit statement as to the nature of his metaphysical beliefs. The Chorus states:

> "Alles Vergängliche Ist nur ein Gleichnis; Das Unzulängliche Hier wirds Ereignis; Das Unbeschreibliche, Hier ists getan; Das Ewigweibliche Zieht uns hinan."[35]

[Everything transient is only a parable; the inaccessible here becomes actual; the ineffable is here achieved; the Eternal-Feminine draws us on.]

Nishida does not explain in detailed terms how he understands this much discussed passage, but it is not too difficult to see why these words should so have stuck him. It is manifestly assumed here that the world of ordinary experience is not all there is. There is another realm or dimension to the real, ordinarily inaccessible and indescribable in some way, perhaps by being beyond conceptual articulation. It would be too speculative to read into this passage as precise a doctrine as Nishida's thesis of the contradictory identity of the one and the many; but view expressed here is at least recognisably like Nishida's. Again, though

this is speculation, perhaps the mysterious notion of the Eternal-Feminine reminded Nishida of the description of the Tao as the Mysterious Female.[36]

On these grounds, Nishida finds in Goethe's work, especially the lyrics, a bridge to the art of the east: "Oriental art is essentially impersonal because the background is an integral part of it. This produces [in our hearts] a formless, boundless vibration, and an endless, voiceless echo."[37] Goethe's lyrics, in Nishida's view, are of a recognisably similar kind, informed by a two-dimensional background: "For Goethe there is no inward and no outward; everything is as it is; it comes from where there is nothing, and goes to where there is nothing,"[38] the 'nothing' here being *mu*, the oriental nothing, the predicateless real from which all things come and to which they return: "When....history is thought of as determination in the eternal Now, where past and future are extinguished in the present, then everything comes without a whence in its coming, and goes without a whither in its going, and that which is, is eternally what it is. Such a thinking flows in the depth of the civilization of the East, in which we have grown up."[39] When produced against such a background, "we reach something like an art of sadness without the shadow of sadness, an art of joy without the shadow of joy,"[40] that is, an art which exhibits perfect serenity.

Santayana on Goethe

As is the case with Nishida, Goethe was a fairly constant presence in Santayana's thought, and his works and ideas are referred to by Santayana with some frequency, though again as with Nishida there are some concentrated essays on which one can profitably focus, notably in *Three Philosophical Poets* (1910) and *Egotism in German Philosophy* (1915). The reason for the constancy of reference in Santayana's case, however, is not one of instinctive sympathy or discernment of a kindred spirit. For Santayana, Goethe was the greatest exemplar of, and the greatest artist produced by, European romanticism. Romanticism Santayana regarded as one of the few irreducibly different major ethical outlooks produced in the European tradition, the others being materialism (which has Lucretius as its great poet) and what he calls supernaturalism (which has Dante),[41] and though Santayana disliked what he took to be the romantic ethic, he could find no more thoroughgoing example of it than Goethe the man or his creation, Faust.

It is on *Faust* that Santayana concentrates to the exclusion of almost the whole of the rest of Goethe's output. As we have seen, Santayana's conception

of philosophy is such that he regards it as impossible to set out a fully-articulated world-view briefly: there is nothing analogous to the great matter revealed in *satori* in his conception of the final truth, and so he does not turn to the lyrics for Goethe's view of the heart of the matter. Goethe's world-view or philosophy is that of romanticism, and that requires space to be stated fully and thoroughly exemplified.

At the heart of romanticism, Santayana contends, is a mystical faith in the will and in action. The will is conceived of by the romantic as "a metaphysical entity whose business is to be vigorous and endlessly energetic while remaining perfectly plastic."[42] As Faust remarks when he translates the first verse of St. John: "In the beginning was the deed" (*Im Anfang war die That!*) The will believes that it can create worlds, and once created these worlds are discarded as stages on the way of the development of the ego, which must endlessly seek new challenges in its thirst for new experience.[43] In Santayana's view Goethe's own life exemplifies this ethic fully. His sympathies with others were only romantic or aesthetic: "they were based on finding in others an interesting variation from himself, an exotic possibility, rather than an identity with himself in thought or in fate.. The sympathy Goethe felt for things was that of a lordly observer, a traveler, a connoisseur, a philanderer; it was egotistical sympathy."[44] Goethe was in practice a romantic egotist, a man for whom the development of the self was the only duty: his family, his friends and his own feelings were so many stepping stones in his moral career: he expanded as he left them behind. Not that his affairs were sensual or callous or cost him nothing; but the sorrow and remorse were themselves desirable and necessary to his growth.[45]

As with the creator, so with the creation. *Faust* is the great epic of the romantic attitude to life. Faust himself is the epitome of the romantic hero: he thirsts for all experience, including the experience of evil. He is no vulgar pleasure seeker. He fears no hell and hopes for no happiness. He makes no bargain (as Marlowe's Dr. Faustus does) to buy earthly pleasures in exchange for eternal torment: neither Goethe nor Faust nor Mephistopheles believes such pleasures are worth having, nor such torments possible.[46] Each episode, from Auerbach's cellar to the founding of the kingdom, in Santayana's view, shows Faust endlessly eager for new experience but always blind to its lessons. At the end of the Gretchen episode - the end of Faust's exploration of the realm of purely private interests - the hero has learned nothing. His will remains wayward if indomitable,

and his achievements are fruitless. All he has decided is that he needs a bigger stage on which to exercise his will, the stage of history. What he has not done is to make any progress in rationality, as Santayana understands it. His purposes have not been in any way refined by his experiences.[47]

As we have seen, Nishida interprets the Helena episode as evidence of Goethe's dissatisfaction with the too-well-formed-precision of the classic; Santayana predictably takes a different line. For him, the Faust/Helena/Euphorion scenes show Goethe at his wisest. Our scholarship may render the Greek spirit familiar to us (Faust may marry Helen); but the product of this union of the Romantic and the classic will be a hybrid unfit to survive in the world. Euphorion is a Romantic soul in the outward garb of classicism, fated to die young. When this enthusiasm has dashed itself against the hard conditions of the world, its mother (the beauty of Greece) will, like Helen, fade before our eyes. It is to Goethe's credit, Santayana contends, that he recognised the incompatibility of the Romantic and the classic: no real marriage of the two approaches can be sustained, and so the classic, like all the other stages on the way, has to be abandoned as the will continues its lifelong quest for novelty and the development of the self.[48]

Equally, he has to take a quite different line from his Japanese contemporary on the interpretation of Faust's political activities. Nishida finds in these episodes evidence that Faust has reached the plane of altruism in morality, and that he is here acting to secure the good of his subjects: " above all else, Goethe's ideal was, as shown by the second part of *Faust* and by the *Wanderjahre*, action for the community of men." [49] Santayana rejects this interpretation - by no means unique to Nishida - entirely. It is difficult to find much altruism in the actions of Mephistopheles, doing Faust's bidding, in the suppression of the insurrection or in the Philemon and Baucis episode. Faust's motive for his political adventures is in fact no more than the boredom which constantly haunts the Romantic spirit. Once an experience has been exhausted, the self must find some new arena in which to develop and expand: "It is characteristic of the absolute romantic spirit that when it has finished with something it must invent a new interest. It beats the bush for fresh game; it is always on the verge of being utterly bored."[50] Faust's political activities have no steady purpose or standard behind them.

Again, Santayana has no patience with the view - accepted by Nishida for example [51] - that the 'message' of *Faust* is to be found in what he calls its

official moral, added under the influence of Schiller, namely that he who strives inevitably strays, but that the striving itself is salvation. [He has in mind the words spoken by the Lord in the Prologue in Heaven: *Es irrt der Mensch, solang er strebt* (So long as he strives, Man will err) and by the Angels in the final scene of *Faust II: Wer immer strebend sich bemüht, den können wir erlösen* (He who does not cease from striving we can redeem)] This idea is an addition to the play, Santayana argues: it is not the seed that gave rise to it, nor the spirit that it breathes. It does not consistently underlie it, inform it, or sum up its world-view, and he cites Goethe himself in defense of this claim: " ..that a man, continually struggling from difficult errors towards something better, should be redeemed, is an effective, and to many, a good enlightening thought; but it is no idea which lies at the foundation of the whole, and of every individual scene." [52] The spirit which informs *Faust* is the spirit of romanticism, of which the categorical imperative is that the ego must develop itself through the constant renewal of experience.

Santayana's interpretation of Goethe's Spinozism is also different from that of Nishida, though he does share the latter's view that Goethe's adoption of Spinoza's views is not thoroughgoing and indeed cannot be, granted the status Goethe allows to individuals and his view on limited personal immortality already referred to. From Spinoza, in Santayana's view, Goethe took everything that is serious in the overall message of *Faust*, and in particular the doctrine of seeing things *sub specie aeternitatis*. This doctrine Santayana interprets and applies to *Faust* as follows: "A thing is seen under the form of eternity when all its parts or stages are conceived in their true relations, and thereby conceived together. The complete biography of Caesar is Caesar seen under the form of eternity. Now the complete biography of Faust, Faust seen under the form of eternity, shows forth his salvation. God and Faust himself, in his last moment of insight, see that to have led such a life, in such a spirit, *was* to be saved....To have felt such perpetual dissatisfaction is truly satisfactory; such desire for universal experience is the right experience." [53] Faust was all along the servant of god, as god is portrayed by Goethe.

Again it is Spinozism - and not the Catholicism which some interpreters have found in it - which in Santayana's view underlies the final scene of the drama and gives the key to the sense of the haunting Chorus Mysticus. Faust is in this scene about to pass into another world, but rather than being his salvation this is the continuance of his trial. The Chorus Mysticus

says that everything here is but an image or parable, but seen *sub specie aeternitatis* the insufficient is turned into something actual and complete. What seems as ordinarily conceived to be an endless pursuit becomes, when interpreted in the appropriate and profound Spinozist manner, a perfect fulfillment. The Eternal Feminine is the ideal of something infinitely attractive and essentially inexhaustible which draws life on from stage to stage: Gretchen and Helen are both symbols of this ideal. [54]

Faust ends on the same philosophical level on which it began, the level of Romanticism: "The worth of life lies in pursuit, not in attainment; therefore, everything is worth pursuing, and nothing brings satisfaction - save this endless destiny itself."[55] In *Faust* Goethe presents us with experience in its immediacy, variety and apparent groundlessness. He also presents it as a series of episodes. There is no totality in the episodes because the ground for them is not known. In a sense Goethe presents us with what is most fundamental, "the turbid flux of sense, the cry of the heart, the first tentative notions of art and science, which magic or shrewdness might hit upon."[56] Such knowledge, however, is impressionistic and casual, and shows sharply the limitations of romanticism as a serious ethic. It remains, Santayana contends, obstinately empirical and learns nothing from its varied experiences.

Some Conclusions

In conclusion I would like to offer some reflections on this comparison, in particular with regard to aesthetic experience. The by and large contrasting reactions to Goethe we have found in the works of these two major philosophers seem to me to offer an admirable exemplification and confirmation of a powerful thesis concerning aesthetic properties and aesthetic experience put forward in Kendall Walton's essay *Categories of Art.* [57] Walton there argues that it is a mistake to assume that the aesthetic properties which we take to be present in aesthetic objects and which are the basis of our interpretation and evaluation of them are just there waiting to be read off: to assume this is to assume that the mind can be as innocent as the eye was once claimed to be. For example, my aesthetic experience of a piece of music will be different according to the descriptions under which I conceptualize it, descriptions which will vary inevitably with my experience and knowledge. I will respond a little differently to Opus 111 according as I conceptualize it as: a piece of piano music; a piece written in Europe in the early nineteenth century; a piece written within and modifying the classical style; a sonata by Beethoven; a late sonata by Beethoven;

Beethoven's last piano sonata. All of these descriptions indicate differences in experience and familiarity with the work, and these are relevant factors in conditioning how I will respond to the work and in all probability how I will estimate a given interpretation of it. Indeed, the ways in which I conceptualise the aesthetic encounter, the descriptions under which I experience the aesthetic object, are a major constituent of the aesthetic experience, together with feelings and attitudes, themselves like all mental contents having the property of intentionality, also experienced under descriptions.

In his essay Walton is specially concerned with the properties of resemblance and representation, but the point can be generalised not only across the area of the aesthetic within a tradition but, I would argue, across whole traditions. Here the differences of mental set and experience generally become deeper. Within a given tradition, there is likely to be - except for the usual disagreements concerning the avant garde - rough agreement with regard to what counts as art, as an aesthetic virtue, and as aesthetic experience, and these views are themselves located within a wider web of what one can call cultural assumptions or presuppositions. Such an assumption of in-culture rough agreement cannot safely be made across traditions. Where there are differences between cultures at very deep levels of conceptual generality and belief, these differences have a conditioning effect on the general area of the aesthetic. Since space is limited I must offer only one type of example from this rich and rewarding field of investigation.

It is well known that translators of Japanese works on what we would call aesthetics are not able to produce any neat equivalents for the Japanese terms which are central to the articulation of the Japanese aesthetic outlook. The key terms - e.g. *sabi*; *wabi*; *yugen*; *hana*; *kokoro*; *kotoba*; *sugata*; *mono no aware* and so forth - resolutely resist easy rendering into western languages, and the translators need to give generally quite extensive glosses in order to point the western reader in the right direction. The content of these glosses has to include reference to a much wider area of experience than the aesthetic, for these terms, like their western counterparts, are embedded in a network of cultural beliefs and assumptions. For example, here is a list of comments drawn from eastern and western sources about the first term on this list, *sabi*. *Sabi* is : a sense of the transitoriness of all things tinged always with sadness; it is felt in solitude; it includes a sense of spontaneity, of all things occurring without relation to others; it is a sense of deep illimitable quietude; it is more readily experienced when we

are older, when it comes without being sought; *sabi* has to do with a particular atmosphere, arising from a scene that need not involve a human being, and this atmosphere is generated when something fulfils its destiny in the vast expanse of the universe. To see a creature experiencing its root destiny of transience gives rise to *sabi*. *Sabi* is not the English loneliness which suggests a state of inward drabness; rather *sabi* is a state of being alone in which we are not lonely, but are in a state in which we and all things interpenetrate. Hence *sabi* can be said to have to do with the merging of the temporal with the eternal, the mutable with the immutable. *Sabi* involves seeing the infinite and eternal in the here and now, and so is akin to *satori*. *Sabi* involves the belief that one attains perfect spiritual serenity by immersing oneself in the ego-less life of nature and it has a connection with the concept of nirvana, the state in which all things are experienced as they really are, empty. And so forth.

What this list makes quite clear is why *sabi* has no neat equivalent in western languages. It is an aesthetic property which would only have been conceived of in a culture in which the ultimate values and attitudes are embodied in concepts like *satori* and nirvana; in which ordinary self-conscious awareness is a condition not to be valued or reinforced but to be subdued; in which the surface ego is regarded as an illusion. Reality or the ultimate is here something with which not only should one seek to bring oneself into harmony, but also from which ultimately one is non-different, a marked contrast to the commonest western view that nature is something out there, the not-self, material to be worked on and bent to our purposes. The root western assumption about art - and the very term is cognate with 'artifice' and 'artificial' and so on - is that art is different from nature, is nature methodised, and reflects human purposes. By contrast, eastern aesthetic terms generally, like *sabi*, reflect the alternative values and outlines here outlined.

Viewed against these considerations, the contrasting interpretations of Goethe we have been considering are the reverse of surprising, being the consistent and expected reflection in the works of two extremely intelligent and perceptive philosophers of aesthetic predispositions generated by deeply different cultural backgrounds. These backgrounds predisposed them to find different virtues in Goethe, and their aesthetic experiences of his work will have been appropriately different. What they regard as important features of his work, and the degree to which they were evidently either moved or irritated or left indifferent by other features of it, is always consonant with the values of their cultural

background. Thus we have seen that the root assumptions made by Nishida and Santyana about what art can do, and about the nature of the poetic gift, are different. For Santayana, the poet has the ability to break free of conceptual habits, and to articulate a new conceptual framework incorporating a comprehensive set of ideals appropriate for a rational life in the prevailing conditions. For Nishida the great poet has a power of intuitive insight akin to that of the seer, but with the skill so to construct poems such that this insight can be hinted at for the rest of us not so blessed. There is one timeless truth to be articulated, rather than ideals which can appropriately change with historical circumstance. Hence the consonant focus on epic drama and lyric respectively; hence the focus on the metaphysical background and the romantic ethic respectively. Again, for Santayana aesthetic experience has as one of its properties that of shaking up our mental habits in a profitable way, as the artwork articulates to us the insights of the artist into the ideal possibilities of experience. For Nishida, as for so many of those thinkers for whom the bedrock and unquestionable foundation of life is revealed in the mystical encounter, aesthetic experience is of a kind with the mystical, less intense no doubt, but as it were on the same scale : an intuition of the real, a hint of the state of supreme insight, to which no concepts apply.

Interesting as these differences are, it is important in cases of comparison such as these not to overlook the similiarities, since they too are instructive: indeed, unless the two traditions we have been glancing at were not in some ways occupying common ground, the study of comparative aesthetics would be on shaky foundations. Santayana and Nishida have to operating with some community of view as to what counts as being the area of the aesthetic for a meaningful comparison to be possible at all. In the present case and at the level of aesthetic virtues, it is clear that both these philosophers assume that truth, albeit differently conceived, is such a virtue. Neither has any inclination toward aestheticism.[58] Both assume that it is the proper business of poetry at its highest level of accomplishment to articulate and communicate truths about the human condition, and both would regard Goethe's technical skill as a poet - incomparable though it is - as in the service of this deeper and more valuable function. Nishida singles out and praises Goethe's lyrics because they suggest what he takes to be the truth of all truths; Santayana singles out *Faust* because it is a thorough exemplification of a set of ideals which, even if unacceptable to him, is too powerful to be ignored.

One final point: none of what has been said in this essay is to be taken as a defense of any form of cultural relativism, assuming that it is possible to formulate a version of this notion which is both interesting and not obviously self-refuting. Though it is an ideal not easy of accomplishment, I would wish to argue that there is no reason why a person brought up in one culture - and there cannot be a self which is not located within a culture - cannot by means of careful study come close to understanding what it is like to view the world through the lenses of a culture which has a different language; uses some incommensurable concepts and embodies fundamentally different attitudes. If that is so, it is enough to deprive the more dramatic forms of relativism of any real bite.

Notes and References

References to Santayana's works are where possible given to the Triton Edition, New York: Scribners 1936-40, 15 vols, in the form : title, *Works, Vol no.*, page. References to any of his works not in that edition are given in the usual way.

(1) *An Enquiry into the Good* tr. Masao Abe and Christopher Ives. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990, p.57

(2) op cit p.145

(3) It is of course possible to adopt a metaphysic of this kind or with an analogous logical structure but to deny that art or the imagination have any positive role to play in putting us in touch with reality. The best known example of this approach is Plato, who, in the period of his development when he believed in the reality of a realm of Forms, regarded mimetic art as the high road away from knowledge of the real, and the artist (as performer, at any rate) as having no real knowledge of either the real or the subject-matter of their art.

(4) The matter is summed up with customary lucidity in C.M. Bowra *The Romantic Imagination* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950

(5) *Art and Morality*, tr. D.A. Dilworth and V.H. Viglielmo. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1973, p.33

(6) Op cit, p.112

(7) Op cit, p.161

(8) Op cit, p.167. The same idea appears recast in the vocabulary of the third phase of Nishida's philosophical development, that of the logic of place. In these terms, he describes aesthetic intuition as that in which the noema of consciousness is submerged in the noesis. Cf the essay *The Intelligible World* in *Intelligibilty and the Philosophy of Nothingness*, tr. R.

Schinzinger. Westport (Conn.): Greenwood Press, 1973, p.111.This essay first appeared in Nishida's *Self-consciousness of the Universal*, 1930.

(9) Cf.e.g. the essay *The Unity of Opposites* in Schinzinger, op cit, p.163

(10) *The Intelligible World* in Schinzinger, op cit, p.135

(11) *Reason in Science, Works V,* p.226. The same metaphysic appears in a new conceptual dress in Santayana's later system, the Realms of Being, cf *The Realm of Matter,* passim.

(12) Cf e.g. *Reason in Common Sense, Works III,* p.13

(13) These views are the subject-matter of *Reason in Art, Works IV,* first published in 1905.It is one of the quirks of philosophical history that Santayana's contribution to aesthetics has been more or less identified with the theory that beauty is objectified pleasure, the central thesis of his first book, *The Sense of Beauty*, 1896, *Works I.* This is only one element in a comprehensive aesthetic, developed throughout Santayana's career.

(14) Cf e.g. *The Sense of Beauty, Works I,*p.22

(15) *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, Works II,* p.188

(16) loc cit

(17) Cf. e.g. op cit, p.148; *The Sense of Beauty, Works I,* pp. 139-40

(18) *Moral Symbols in the Bible,* [written c.1900] in Santayana (ed. Daniel Cory) *The Idler and his Works and Other Essays.* New York: Braziller, 1957, p.169

(19) Cf. e.g. *The Sense of Beauty, Works I,* p. 199

(20) *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, Works II,* pp.125-6

(21) Cf. *Three Philosophical Poets, Works VI,* pp.8-10

(22) *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, Works II,* p.190

(23) Op cit p.191

(24) On the endlessly debated question of the extent of Goethe's Spinozism, cf. David Bell *Spinoza in Germany from 1670 to the Age of Goethe*: University of London Institute of Germanic Studies, 1984, ch.VI. In thinking about this issue it is worth keeping constantly in mind a point made by Professor Barry Nisbet: Goethe was throughout his life suspicious of systems. The universe appeared to him too complex and multifaceted to be summable up in a fashion neat enough to be exhaustively described within the conceptual framework of any one philosophical system or set of principles. In the light of the available documentation and on the evidence of his works, there can be no doubt that Spinoza's philosophy was deeply congenial to Goethe, but this does not entail that he accepted every element of the Spinozist outlook, a point taken up in the main text vis-à-vis the place of the individual in Goethe's thought. Cf. H.B. Nisbet: *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition*: University of London Institute of Germanic Studies, 1972, pp.1-2.

(25) *An Inquiry into the Good*, p.71

(26) The Japanese term *haikei* means background, backdrop or backing in a literal sense. All references to the essay *Goethe's Metaphysical Background* are to the translation in Schinzinger, op.cit.

(27) *Goethe's Metaphysical Background*, p.145. Nishida's imagery inevitably recalls the description of the Tao as the uncarved block, cf. *Tao te ching* chs. 15, 19, 28, 32, and 57.

(28) *Goethe's Metaphysical Background*, p.146

(29) Op cit, p.147

(30) Op cit, p.150

(31) Op cit, p.149. Nishida uses the German term in his text.

(32) Op cit, pp. 148-9

(33) Op cit, p. 145

(34) Op cit, p.152

(35) *Faust II*, ll.12104 - end.

(36) Cf. *Tao te ching* chs 6, 10, 28. Towards the end of his life Goethe developed an interest in Chinese culture, and it is quite likely he had read a translation of the *Tao te ching*. Quite what he means by the Eternal-Feminine, however, is not an issue which can be gone into here.

(37) *Goethe's Metaphysical Background*, p. 146

(38) Op cit, p.157. In speaking of the non-difference of inward and outward, Nishida has in mind two lines from *Epirrhema*:

'Nichts ist drinnen, nichts ist draussen;
Denn was innen, das ist aussen." (ll. 3-4)
[Nothing is inside; nothing is outside; because what is within is without]

(39) *Goethe's Metaphysical Background*, pp.158-9

(40) Op cit, p.158

(41) *Three Philosophical Poets, Works VI*, pp.6-7

(42) *Egotism in German Philosophy, Works VI*, p.174

(43) Cf. op cit, p. 173; *Three Philosophical Poets, Works VI*, pp.7-8

(44) *Egotism in German Philosophy, Works VI*, p. 171

(45) Op cit, p.173

(46) *Three Philosophical Poets, Works VI*, p.112

(47) Op cit, pp.113-6

(48) Op cit, pp.116-9

(49) *Goethe's Metaphysical Background*, p.152

(50) *Three Philosophical Poets, Works VI*, p.122

(51) *Goethe's Metaphysical Background*, p.153

(52) Eckermann: *Gespräche mit Goethe* etc, 1837 and 1848. Tr. John Oxenford. London: Bell, 1975. Conversation of 6th May 1827, p.258

(53) *Three Philosophical Poets, Works VI*, p.128

(54) Op cit, p.131

(55) Loc cit

(56) Op cit, p.135

(57) Kendall Walton Categories of Art repr in Robert Wilkinson (ed) *Theories, of Art and Beauty* The Open University, 1991, pp.544 sqq

(58) This comment might be thought to be in tension with the identification, in Santayana's later philosophy, of the spiritual life with the aesthetic life. What he means by both terms, however, is a detached, contemplative attitude to experience; a state in which the data of experience are enjoyed for their inherent properties rather than as signs of particulars in the external world, i.e. as means to allow us to deal with the environment. This state, I would argue has (interestingly) more in common with the condition of enlightenment than with the doctrines and extravagancies of the European aesthetic movement. The relationship of Santayana's later ethics and aesthetics to eastern views, however, is another story.

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Japanese Aesthetic

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There are certain concepts found in Japanese culture which constitute a different conception of taste than those with which we are familiar in the West. Any comparison and/or contrast of these concepts, which comprise a Japanese aesthetic, with Western aesthetic notions needs to take into account three crucial features: 1 the aesthetic sensibilities underlying each culture's aesthetic concepts; 2 the grounding of the concepts in matrices of beliefs; [3] the "logics" governing the use of terms used to mark the presence or absence of aesthetic features.

In what follows, the key Japanese aesthetic concepts of shibui, jimi, hade, sabi, wabi, miyabi and yugen will be explained and illustrated as well as set in opposition to Western counterparts. "Shibui" is the highest term of aesthetic praise for the Japanese; it will be our starting point.

Where in the West, the beautiful object is often an attention-getter,[1] for the Japanese sensibility the ultimate in beauty, shibui, is anything but a quality that will attract attention. The term "shibui" has its origins in a form of life-style that government leaders pursued during the period in Japanese history between 1330 and 1520. [2] The term was chosen to indicate a distance from the rich and ostentatious. Its literal meaning is that of the astringent. The contrast involved is between the flavor of a fruit with a sweet quality and the flavor of an unripened persimmon which is puckery, harsh and biting. From this relatively simple and clear contrast, the concept of shibui has developed over time into a complicated notion composed of a number of subtle and interrelated features.

Restraint is one of the ingredients in shibui. Shibui art objects are unobtrusive, unostentatious and modest with understatement as a characteristic style. An underlying notion is that the less powerful object will probably be the more artistically effective. Another core feature is hiddenness. The appreciator who comes in contact with shibui finds his or her taste is left unsatiated by the shibui object. Shibui's ever hidden aspect creates a lingering attraction for more

since the object is so fashioned that it reveals only enough of itself to impel one to seek additional qualities of what has been found pleasing but which are not readily perceivable. Another core element in shibui is simplicity. Shibui designs are left unadorned and incomplete, allowing much scope for the appreciators to exercise their imagination. The would-be appreciator of a Noh play or a Zen sand and rock garden finds his/her imagination taxed to the limit by the extremely minimal suggestiveness encountered.

These qualities of simplicity, hiddenness, and restraint do not exist independently in an object that is correctly said to be shibui. Indeed these shibui-making features interpenetrate one another. The simplicity in style works hand in hand with restraint; for to leave a design unadorned is to exercise restraint; for one who would incorporate a hidden aspect into a work of art, simplicity and restraint are ready-made means to this objective; the simple and restrained surface invites the appreciator to look for more, for something not readily apparent, for something hidden.

While on the surface an object with shibui is simple and austere, it would be a mistake to think that shibui in any way involves a slighting of craftsmanship. In fact, much respect for craft as well as for the material crafted is evident in the shibui object. This aspect of production value should not, however, lead one to be surprised to find also a shibui tendency to be attracted to the unfinished, the incomplete and the fragmented. Both respect for craftsmanship and a taste for the incomplete arise together in the shibui sensibility.

To fall short in achieving shibui is to have the quality of jimi. When jimi is present there is an overemphasis on the restrained, sober side on a continuum on which restraint resides. When objects are jimi, they often become too proper and too monotonous. For instance, a youth who always dresses in a brown coat, brown shoes and a beige shirt and trousers would be an ideal case for the drabness characteristic of jimi.

To overshoot shibui on the other end of the continuum would bring about an instance of hade. Bright in color, ostentatious in design, hade commands recognition. It demands attention due to the over all effect in gaudiness and showiness. The Toshogu Shrine in Nikko, Japan is a famous instance of hade architecture, with its clashing colors, intricate carvings covering every inch of the structure and its capacity to overwhelm the onlooker. Shibui objects may have presence, an authoritativeness but they do not overwhelm; instead their

simple, restrained, austere and hidden qualities beckon the appreciator to look more deeply.

Quite closely associated with shibui are the concepts of sabi and wabi. When an emphasis on the value of aging is added to shibui-making features, the object is sabi. The term "sabi" (like "Shibui") has undergone an evolutionary development vis-a-vis its meaning. The courtiers of the Heian period (794-1192) particularly loved what was new and fresh. The Medieval Japanese, on the other hand, developed a strong sensitivity for things which showed signs of wear and aging- the withered bough, the broken branch, the fallen flower, the scent of chrysanthemums with their musty quality. By contrast, one may think of the Western preference for the perfumed quality of a rose. The Medieval concept of sabi is found in contemporary Japan's aesthetic language. One who perceives sabi quality in an object perceives it in a way associated with a quality of depth which comes from aging. Time may have taken its toll on the object yet in an important way it is nevertheless richer for this process. The state of mind underlying an appreciation for aging is not simply a passive acceptance of aging but also involves a sense of transcendence to a positive, affirmative attitude where one has a feeling of affection for the thing that is aged.

Wabi centers around the attraction to an unadorned, subdued and imperfect form. One might describe wabi as "...the feeling of melancholy and humbleness which comes from a realization of one's insignificance in nature's scheme." [3] To an outsider, a tea ceremony conducted in a spirit of wabi may seem unnecessarily spare. However, wabi involves casting away all that is unnecessary in order to achieve a peaceful state of mind. Poverty of manner and expression is essential to this process. In a teahouse, one will typically find an enclosure made of bare wood with furnishing, lighting and activity shorn of embellishments. Quietness, solitude and simplicity characterize this austere ceremony, with a feeling of serenity ideally pervading the setting and the experience. In addition to spareness, wabi involves clarity of image and technique. It suggests an uncluttered and precise attitude in which the individual gains a clear awareness of nature. Examples of objects exemplifying wabi are a plain twig in a flower arrangement, the coarse black cotton of a kimono and the spare clarity of a rock and sand garden.

Growing out of restraint as a fundamental aesthetic principle and closely allied with, but distinguished from, shibui is the concept of miyabi. Aesthetic tastes so far described may give the impression of a lack of color and luster.

There is, however, a more ostentatious strain in Japanese taste. "Miyabi" stands for high aristocratic elegance, refinement and sophisticated grandeur. Paradoxically, the concept of miyabi may have its roots in Buddhism. Though mention of Buddhism calls to mind contemplative repose and severity of life-style, the religion gained favor among the Japanese due to its resplendent ceremony and the splendor of its ornate architecture. During the Heian period, members of the aristocratic society, enjoying the sumptuous living of the time but being somewhat restrained by the strong influence of Buddhist pessimism, expressed themselves in a rich and elegant splendor without being overly immoderate.

When appreciators step into the shoin of Nishi-Honganji, a shrine in Kyoto, Japan, they will be confronted by the splendid paintings on its panels and screens, as well as the ceilings of its various chambers. Gorgeous as they are, however, they do not aim to bedazzle the viewers, for they are done in a restrained, highly disciplined manner in achieving their sophisticated elegance. Rich but not gaudy, colorful but not complex, the total effect is one of regal fineness. Many other artistic treasures of the Japanese culture may be described as miyabi-the glittering stateliness of the golden Pavilion, the ornate but unobtrusive Nijo Castle, colorfully brocaded obi, and lacquerware with contrasting mother-of-pearl inlay. Restraint in the use of color, line and design are discernible; undisciplined excess is undesirable; clash of color and design are meticulously shunned.

Finally, there is the term "yugen" which of all Japanese aesthetic terms is the most deeply embedded in the metaphysical/religious tradition of Zen Buddhism. Many writers commenting on the Japanese aesthetic have argued that Western sensibility has not been attuned to a quality like yugen because it has not gravitated toward the drawing of distinctions and the naming of qualities that would be involved in its identification. For this reason, to the Westerner, yugen is an elusive, subtle and obscure feature of things. Accordingly, a characteristic approach in explaining the meaning of "yugen" has been to use metaphors and other imagery to guide thought and perception by indirect means to a certain distinctive sort of experience.

Yugen was given prominence in the Japanese aesthetic by Zeami Motokiyo (1364-1444). In his writings about the Noh theatre, yugen was referred to as a quality of gentle gracefulness. Eventually, due to the incorporation of a transcendent characteristic, the term became associated with other concepts of

the Japanese aesthetic such as sabi. In this enriched state, yugen was more than simply a quality of an actor's movements and gestures, becoming indicative of something metaphysical, hidden and profound.

In the spirit of explaining the meaning of "yugen" by indirection, we are told that yugen is obscure, dark, half-revealed, and is tinged with wistful sadness.[4] The rock garden at Ryoanji is characterized as possessing the yugen quality in that it embraces the supposed opposites of radiance and the abysmal.[5] A sense of mystery is also said to attach to yugen through its association with Zen:

> The world this imagery evokes is a ...tranquil world in which nothing remains immutably fixed, a world of mist, rain and wind, of snow and withering flowers. It is much too fragile and elusive a world to be rationally understood or deliberately controlled.[6]

Andrew Tsubaki, in tracing the origins of yugen in its transmission to Japan from Chgina points out:

> The original Chinese term yugen meant to be so mysteriously faint and profound as to be beyond human perception and understanding. Here the term was employed in expressing an idea found in Taoism and Buddhism. As such it contained a philosophical character from the beginning.[7]

Furthermore, emphasis has been placed on a connection of yugen with a consciousness of the perishability of things. The Japanese sensibility expresses itself in a "preference for varieties of beauty which most conspicuously betrayed their impermanence."[8] Quite contrary to the Western craving for objects in the finest of condition, the Japanese aesthetic dictates taking satisfaction in those things that reveal their fragility and their quality of aging. Yugen is apprehended only in a certain state of being-one where consciousness is disinterested. It is 'recognized only with the absence of the self-centered self or subject."[9]

Yugen is like shibui in being the highest form of beauty, but it is different in that unlike shibui it refers to a quality which cannot be expressed in words. Its occurrence depends upon the existence of qualities beyond those features that can be perceived or described; hence the constant references to the obscure, the mysterious and the profound. It involves religiously grounded doctrines such as the dialectic of abundance and nothingness, the entirely natural and the wholly spiritual as well as a notion that it is fully recognizable only to one who can overcome a self-centeredness about his/her perception of nature.

With the foregoing discussion of the Japanese aesthetic in mind, the following comparisons/contrasts with aesthetic conceptions of the West may be made: First, with only the exception of yugen, regardless of the aesthetic term involved, the same core set of features are conditions governing application of the Japanese aesthetic terms (e.g., restraint, simplicity, hiddenness, etc., with only emphasis, slight variation, subtle nuance determining which of the terms apply). How different is the Western case where quite contrasting sets of conditions govern the application of terms used to mark aesthetic features of objects. Roughly equivalent Western concepts for shibui, jimi, hade, and miyabi might be beauty, dullness, garishness, elegant refinement. Think how radically different the features are that would count only towards an application of each of these Western aesthetic terms.

Second, though beauty and shibui are prima facie value characteristics (that is, their presence in an object counts only towards a positive aesthetic evaluation, beauty in the Western conception is not a mean point on a continuum with dullness and garishness as extremes. Indeed, "dull" and "garish" when used to mark the presence of aesthetic features in an object are typically used in a value-neutral way. The context of the object determines whether dullness or garishness contributes to aesthetic goodness. Also, there is no implicit comparison/contrast with beauty as a measure for what it is to be dull or garish. In the Japanese case, shibui is, however, the measure of such qualities, with their departure or variance from its ideal state being central to what it is to be either jimi or hade i.e., coming up short or overshooting shibui.

Third, though there does exist in the West some appreciation for the aesthetically successful use of restraint or of simplicity or of having important hidden aspects in certain art objects, the combination of these characteristics, as is found in an object with shibui, does not have the impact on consciousness in the West that it does for the Japanese. Furthermore, the qualities of perishability and depth owing to aging emphasized in sabi and the appreciation for poverty characteristic of wabi have little place in Western art, except perhaps in those works which are at least in part derivative from the East.

Fourth, shibui and yugen occupy a preemptive position at the center of art for the Japanese. Both "shibui" and "yugen" are terms of highest aesthetic praise. In Western aesthetic conceptions, beauty and profundity (rough equivalents for shibui and yugen, respectively) are but two of many ways to achieve aesthetic excellence. Other qualities are not measured against them

and certainly do not radiate, as it were, out of them. Moreover, "shibui," besides serving double duty as a term used to mark an aesthetic feature of an object as well as a term of highest aesthetic praise, also can be used as a style term. Shibui style is coveted for many stylistic purposes such as in garden arrangement, for interior decoration and in architectural design. There is no corresponding "beautiful style" in Western conceptions.

Finally in understanding the conditions for applying "shibui" or "sabi" or "wabi" or "yugen," we are led far beyond what would be taken as relevant aesthetically in the West to consider matters having to do with the nature of reality, finitude and self-identity. Not just any restraint or just any simplicity or just any hiddenness will do. "The characteristics forming the core of the Japanese aesthetic are deeply embedded in and are ultimately grounded by a matrix of religious beliefs. In the West one can, ordinarily, identify the conditions contributing to the presence of beauty or garishness, et. al., without touching on matters of religious-metaphysical import. That Japanese aesthetic concepts must be set against such a background marks a distinctive feature of their unique aesthetic sensibility. [10]

Notes and References

1 Sircello, Guy: *A New Theory of Beauty* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) p. 19. 2. These leaders were called Ashikaga Shoguns.

3. Hall, John and Richard Beardsley: Twelve Doors to Japan (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965) p. 303.

4. Deutsch, Eliot, *Studies in Comparative Aesthetics*: Monograph No. 2 (Honolulu: Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, University Press of Hawaii, 1975) p. 29.

5. Deutsch, ibid., p. 34.

6. Kaula, David, "On Noh Drama," *Tulane Drama Review*, September 1960, pp. 69-70.

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8. Keene, Donald, "Japanese Aesthetics," *Philosophy East and West*, July 1969, p. 305.

9. Deutsch, op.cit., p. 33.

10. The content of the this essay developed during a series of course offerings with Noboru Inamoto on Japanese film and culture at the University of Southern California.[21]

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Aesthetic Qualities, Aesthetic Experience, Aesthetic Value

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Introduction

In an early work, *Speaking of Art*, Peter Kivy suggests this concise summary of the problem of aesthetic experience: it involves either the special experience of ordinary qualities, or the ordinary experience of special qualities.[1] I believe this claim needs to be amended considerably in order to capture the full complexity of the issue. First, two more candidates must be added to Kivy's list. In canvassing all the combinations regarding aesthetic experience, we must entertain four possibilities: it involves either (1) the special experience of special qualities, or (2) the special experience of ordinary qualities, or (3) the ordinary experience of special qualities, or (4) the ordinary experience of ordinary qualities. I take it that endorsing option #4 is tantamount to simply denying the existence of aesthetic experience altogether. While some might be inclined to say the same of option #3, I would prefer to view it as a gloss or analysis of the notion of such distinctive aesthetic experience.

But doubling Kivy's list from two to four possibilities is just the beginning. A thoroughgoing analysis of aesthetic experience would not only take a stand on the nature of its correlate or object; it would also extend one level further in each direction and speculate about the relations between aesthetic qualities and their factual or perceptual base, on the one hand, and between aesthetic experience and aesthetic value, on the other. Accommodating these additions to the logical space of candidate answers here, we now confront a dizzying array of possibilities. Jerrold Levinson, in his paper "Aesthetic Supervenience," has argued that there are four possible relations in which aesthetic qualities may stand to their base properties: definitional reduction, positive condition-governing, negative condition-governing, and emergentism.[2]

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And surveying views about aesthetic value, we can sketch at least three options linking aesthetic experience with such value: it might be criterial for such value (definitional instrumentalism), causally contributive to it (contingent instrumentalism), or independent of it (intrinsic artistic value).[3]

In sum, we have four candidate theories for the first relation (that linking base properties to aesthetic properties), four candidate theories for the second relation (that linking aesthetic properties to aesthetic experience), and three candidate theories for the third relation (that linking aesthetic experience to aesthetic value). A quick glance at the arithmetic needed to determine all possible combinations yields an answer of 48. I will certainly not attempt to investigate each of these combinations in the course of this paper. Indeed, some of them may not in fact be compossible.[4] I shall simply attempt a first broad survey of the terrain. My goals are to identify philosophers who held some of these views, point out the shortcomings of some of their approaches, and indicate some preferred routes through the maze. I shall begin with central pairing, that between quality and experience.

Experience, Special and Ordinary

Two problems confront us in trying to choose from my revision of Kivy's grid. What distinguishes special from ordinary qualities, and what distinguishes special from ordinary experience? In addressing the second problem, we might hope to find some introspective criterion. Perhaps the specialness of aesthetic experience is indicated by distinctive qualia or feeling tones. This seems not so far from the view Clive Bell defended in his essay "The Aesthetic Hypothesis." Bell portrayed the aesthetic emotion as a sort of sexualized inner clanging to which only the sensitive were privy. In the presence of significant form, it triggered a kind of ecstasy. Here is Bell's statement of this view: "The starting-point for all systems of aesthetics must be the personal experience of a peculiar emotion...The emotion is called the aesthetic emotion; and if we can discover some quality common and peculiar to all the objects that provoke it, we shall have solved what I take to be the central problem of aesthetics...'.Significant Form' is the one quality common to all works of visual art...A good work of visual art carries a person who is capable of appreciating it out of life into ecstasy..."[5]

Bell is criticized – and rightly so! – for grounding his theory in a pair of unacceptably circular definitions. We have no independent access to either

aesthetic emotion or significant form. Each is known only through the other. What might provide adequate entree to the notion of aesthetic experience or aesthetic emotion? Presumably, these must be known through some intrinsic identifying feature, or through a link to something outside themselves which is in turn definitively knowable. Models for the first sort of requirement might be our relation to our own pains, or perhaps, to extend the sexuality implicit in Bell's theory, our relation to our own orgasms. We are authoritative in our reports about our own pains. If I sincerely and repeatedly insist that I have a headache, then the reply "No you don't" is simply not in order. Nor is any suggestion that relocates or redescribes my condition. Even if you ascertain the actual source of my pain, or amass telling evidence of its severity, my avowal doesn't change unless I agree that a new description better suits my experience. In this way, our privileged access to our own pains renders us perhaps not infallible, but definitely incorrigible, judges of our painful experiences.

Not only are we uniquely authoritative in making such self-reports, but the phenomenology of pain is also such that we can't be in pain and not know it. By definition, pains are unpleasant feelings that announce themselves to us. The notion of an "unfelt pain" is without application.. Granted, I may not be able to determine, of a particular sensation, whether it is very strong pressure or very mild pain. But these are just niceties of classification. That I have the sensation is not in question. By contrast, we would say of the athlete who heroically finishes the race or game despite a serious fracture not that he or she was in pain and didn't feel it, but that there was no pain at all, or that the pain was perceived and endured.[6] Overall, then, we stand in this very special relation to our pains: they are transparent and self-intimating, and we are incorrigible in our reports of them.

There is no reason to think that aesthetic experience works in the way I have just been describing. Despite all his talk of ecstasy and transport, Clive Bell is not entitled to the sexual analogy he tries to exploit in his account of the aesthetic emotion. Compare a query to Anne Landers , Dear Abby, or Dr. Ruth, from someone wondering whether she's had an orgasm. The appropriate answer here is something like "If you have to ask, then sorry, but you haven't had the experience in question." This testifies to our belief that such experiences have the epistemological hallmarks mentioned above – they are transparent and self-intimating, and our relation to them is privileged in that our sincere avowals cannot be called into question except for issues of meaning. We could spin

evolutionary arguments about the overall adaptability of having such relation to our own pains and pleasures. There is no reason to think evolution has fitted us to be infallible recognizers of good art as well as of harmful situations and good sex. We seem neither to have nor to need aesthetic experience of the sort Bell was trying to defend.

So far I have been arguing that our access to aesthetic experience does not parallel our access to our own pains or sexual pleasures. Art does not seem to trigger in us a mental state that is immediately and incorrigibly recognized on the basis of its distinctive phenomenology. But even if there is no type of aesthetic experience that is immediately knowable in this way, perhaps there is a state that we can reliably get to through some sort of process or procedure we go through. The analogy might be some sort of machine that arrives at a particular machine state by first passing through a requisite series of prior states. The example I am thinking of in the aesthetics literature here is Edward Bullough's classic essay "Psychical Distance." Bullough there uses "distance" as a verb; he characterizes distancing as an operation we can perform at will. Although it can be assumed in non-artistic situations (recall his famous example of a fog at sea), perhaps the act of distancing in the presence of a work of art sends us into a state in which we are undergoing aesthetic experience. The process here would be a progressive stripping away of practical concerns (Bullough's "putting out of gear"...) until we are focussed entirely on the purported aesthetic qualities of the object in question.[7]

Two questions arise about this candidate for aesthetic experience. First, is it the distinctive aesthetic experience that we seek, or merely a uniquely riveted or dedicated type of attention? The very fact that Bullough characterizes distancing in negative terms, emphasizing the practical considerations we banish from our minds rather than citing the competing concerns that take their place, inclines me to view the end state achieved as a rarefied form of attention. Consider a sort of parlor-game instance of distancing. It is possible to take any word in the English language and repeat it to oneself so often that it loses all sense of meaning and becomes akin to a nonsense syllable. The process may take place even more rapidly with a somewhat unfamiliar word. So, take a moment to repeat the word "admumbrate" to yourself over and over. If you find yourself losing your grip on the meaning of the word ("to give a sketchy outline, to disclose partially or guardedly") and focussing instead on the sounds of its three component syllables, then scrutinize this mini act of distancing. Into what

mental state have you dispatched yourself? You have presumably lost such basic practical skills as how to use or understand the word. Do any feeling tones remain? Suppose you previously liked or disliked the word – because it seems arch and stuffy, or because it figured in a spelling quiz you recall from sixth grade, or because you're just put off by the sound of its three syllables. Do these attendant pleasures and pains disappear in distancing ?

Just considering this one rather artificial example of distancing has pointed to a dilemma for Bullough's theory. Bullough himself acknowledges that the process of distancing can be overdone. What is most desirable, he says, is "the utmost decrease of Distance without its disappearance."[8] This admission makes clear that a problem that arose for aesthetic experience persists with Bullough's replacement candidate. We have no internal signs to mark the optimal degree of distance. Yet lacking these, we can only engage the process until all extraneous practical and personal associations have been pared away. The end-point will inevitably be rapt attention to nothing but the perceptual properties of the object before us. Returning to the alternatives with which we framed this investigation, such engagement sounds ordinary rather than special. It does not seem a promising candidate for aesthetic experience.

I submit that Bullough's theory fails on internal grounds, since it offers no means for identifying the desired appreciative state, that with the "utmost decrease of Distance." Moreover, examining the process of distancing encourages us to redirect our investigation, since the question we have ended with concerns not the nature of distance optimally achieved, but rather the set of qualities that that state tunes in to. Before turning to the new topic of special vs. ordinary qualities, let me address one last point raised by Bullough's theory. That point concerns its Kantian origins.

Bullough's proposal is clearly in the Kantian tradition, a tradition that emphasizes disinterestedness as a hallmark of the aesthetic. Yet I have not yet in this paper mentioned Kant's theory. Should we look here for an account of aesthetic experience? Surely Kant posits a distinctive mental state – the free play of imagination and understanding, based on no concept, and resulting in pleasure – into which we are sent when we contemplate certain combinations of form. Moreover, Kant speaks at times as if we are aware of this free play. Consider a passages from the Second Moment of the Analytic of the Beautiful: "We now occupy ourselves with the easier question, in what way we are conscious of a mutual subjective harmony of the cognitive powers with one another in the

judgment of taste...[T]hat subjective unity of relation can only make itself known by means of sensation."[9]

Of course, Kant's "easier question" is not at all easy. At issue is whether Kant's posit of a common sense that allows us an aesthetical (as opposed to an intellectual) consciousness of the subjective harmony of our cognitive powers fulfills some of the epistemological requirements discussed above. In particular, does it permit immediate acknowledgement of the relevant mental state (the judgement of taste with its concomitant pleasure) each time we enter that state? If yes, then this is indeed a candidate claim about aesthetic experience,. It seems to fit the second of the four possibilities sketched at the start of this paper, portraying aesthetic experience as special experience of ordinary qualities. But the Kantian baggage is just overwhelming here. There is no reason to think cognition in general proceeds as Kant suggests, nor that aesthetic experience is exhausted in encounters with beauty. Even if Kant's account correctly describes our response to certain formal arrays under certain conditions,[10] this involves much too narrow a range of items to which we respond aesthetically. Thus in pursuing both Kant's and Bullough's accounts of aesthetic experience, our attention has shifted from the inherent nature of such experience to questions about its targets. To what qualities are we attending when we have a desirable or optimal aesthetic experience? That is, when we achieve the utmost decrease of Distance without its disappearance (Bullough) or the harmonious free play of our cognitive faculties (Kant)? To address these latter questions, let us turn to the other term in my opening formulations and examine the qualities that are considered when we are experiencing or judging aesthetically.

Qualities, Special and Ordinary

Surely the most famous disquisition on aesthetic qualities is Frank Sibley's much anthologized essay "Aesthetic Concepts," first published in 1949. Sibley there identifies aesthetic concepts as those for the application of which taste or perceptiveness is required. He then offers the following list of typical aesthetic terms: unified, balanced, integrated, lifeless, serene, somber, dynamic, powerful, vivid, delicate, moving, trite, sentimental, tragic. He supplements this list by acknowledging that some terms have both an aesthetic and a non-aesthetic use, others have predominantly aesthetic use (he cites as examples the terms: graceful, delicate, dainty, handsome, comely, elegant, garish), while still others acquire their aesthetic use through metaphorical extension (his examples here are the terms: dynamic, melancholy, balanced, tightly knit).[11]

Other authors follow Sibley and characterize aesthetic qualities by enumerating a list of typical examples. Thus Jerrold Levinson , in "Aesthetic Supervenience," states that he will "content [him]self with the usual enumerative induction to characterize the class with which we are concerned: gracefulness, mournfulness, balance, sublimity, garishness, sobriety, flamboyance, gaiety, eerieness, etc. "[12] Goran Hermeren offers a similar list ("Examples of aesthetic qualities include garishness, tenseness, grace, harmony, gaiety, nervousness, sadness, excitement, somberness, sereneness, solemnity, joy, cheerfulness, boldness, vitality, restraint, sublimity, monumentality, coherence, picturesqueness, mysteriousness, and beauty.") in his *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* article "Aesthetic Qualities." But Hermeren then goes on to draw some distinctions among items in this class, noting that some aesthetic qualities are complex while others are simple, that some are internal (experienced as in the work) while others are external, that some are metaphorical while others are literal, that some are perceived emotional qualities in the work while others ascribe certain reactions or responses to beholders.[13] Finally, Alan Goldman, in his book *Aesthetic Value*, defines aesthetic properties as "those that contribute to the aesthetic values of artworks," and expands upon this slightly one paragraph later as "those that ground or instantiate in their relations to us or other properties those values of artworks that make them worth contemplating."[14] In his opening taxonomy, Goldman recognizes a rich variety of aesthetic terms each of which picks out properties that can't be described in a purely physical vocabulary. The eight types of terms he singles out are: evaluative, formal, emotion, evocative, behavioral, representational, second-order perceptual, and historical, and for each he lists a series of examples.[15]

Goldman admits that the terms he lists cannot be categorized simply as terms singling out phenomenal properties of works of art, since the correct application of some of them requires knowledge of external contextual or causal factors.[16] Whether a work possesses certain emotion, evocative, or behavioral qualities depends in part on the repertoire available to the artist, the range of alternatives from which the artist made his or her selection,. Nor can historical qualities like originality be applied solely by consulting the work itself. (Compare the point Kendall Walton makes with the example of guernicas in his article "Categories of Art.") Goldman also rules out the possibility that these terms all name regional properties of works of art,[17] as not all of them turn on relations among parts.

In the end, what Goldman deems common to and definitive of the category 'aesthetic quality' is a contributory relation to aesthetic value. This is, for Goldman, a property that can be possessed in varying degrees. For instance, Goldman states that "to call a piece of music sad... is not necessarily to evaluate it;" "to say that a painting's composition is balanced may be to evaluate it positively; to say that it is symmetrical is not evaluative."[18] Calling our attention to "the difference between properties that are evaluative in themselves and those that merely ground evaluations by further examples," Goldman maintains that the justification of aesthetic claims ultimately rests on appeal to non-evaluative formal properties. He calls this last set 'base properties' and distinguishes five varieties: formal, expressive, representational, sensuous, and historical.[19]

Most of the authors just surveyed, despite their differing definitions of aesthetic qualities, concur that they are ascribed to works of art by reference to those works' non-aesthetic properties. Thus in arguing that a melody is graceful, one points out its gentle intervals, lilting articulations and sprightly tempo; in arguing that a painting is dreary, one emphasizes its dark shadows and depressing subject matter. Different positions are of course defended regarding the relation between aesthetic properties and these other non-aesthetic properties, or base properties, on which they depend. Sibley argued in his essay that aesthetic terms are not condition governed. Thus on his view, no ascription of base properties guarantees that a particular aesthetic property will obtain. A sculpture may be pink, curvilinear, and perforated. But the presence of these traits does not establish the work's delicacy if it is also 20 feet tall and made of steel. And this illustrates why an ascription of aesthetic traits seems ever defeasible. We can always think of additional properties which, if possessed by the work, block the application of the aesthetic property in question – the one we in all reasonableness expected the unamended cluster of base properties to support. Goldman, for instance, is fond of supposing hyena cries interspersed in a performance of music by Mozart. Such a performance would not merit the expected aesthetic adjectives. But not only are our expectations of aesthetic description disrupted when properties that would ordinarily command the application of a particular aesthetic term are admixed with properties that call for quite different descriptions (immense scale competing with more conventionally delicate shapes and colors, hyena cries interrupting conventionally attractive melodies...) Our expectations of a connection between

certain base properties and a related aesthetic quality can also be defeated because those same base properties often support the application of a similar but incompatible aesthetic term. For instance, the evidence that one critic offers to show that a work is elegant could be used by another to prove it is flaccid; the cluster of traits supporting an ascription of jauntiness could be turned in another argument to prove the work vapid and banal.

The considerations just adduced are among those Sibley brings out in his article. They provide overwhelming reasons for rejecting the first two of the four possibilities Levinson sketches in his paper "Aesthetic Supervenience." Given that such terms as "graceful" and "jaunty" can fail to hold despite the presence of base properties with which they're conventionally linked, it cannot be the case that aesthetic qualities are definitionally equivalent to clusters of base properties, nor that they are logically supported by the presence of such clusters (the relation Levinson, following Kivy, labels positively condition-governed). The presence of the relevant base properties can never guarantee the application of the aesthetic quality with which they are typically associated. Levinson surveys two remaining choices: that the relation between aesthetic and base properties is negatively condition-governed, or that it is one of supervenience.

Levinson initially rejects the first option because it seems unacceptably vague. It would no doubt be impossible in principle to spell out all the defeating conditions for the application of any given aesthetic term, since we can always imagine further instances that require additional amendment. But supervenience itself is not so clear a notion.[20] In his penultimate section, however, Levinson concedes that some aesthetic properties do seem to be negatively condition governed at least in part, and so to at least to some degree consist in their structural bases. He offers two options between which to choose – that there is a "continuum among aesthetic attributes, some of which would then be said to be more wholly emergent than others" or that emergence does not require "complete conceptual distinctness from the structural base [but only] some substantial measure of conceptual distinctness, reinforced perhaps by phenomenological separability."[21]

Alan Goldman seems to endorse a similarly nuanced view of aesthetic qualities in this respect: he maintains that all such qualities have an evaluative dimension, but that different aesthetic qualities vary in how much they are weighted towards evaluative content, on the one hand, and objective content, on

the other. While we may not always be able to analyze aesthetic properties into their evaluative and non-evaluative components, our aesthetic ascriptions rest on hierarchical chains of justification.[22] An aesthetic quality that is highly evaluative is ascribed to a work by appeal to a quality that is relatively more objective; this quality is in turn ascribed by appeal to a quality that is even less evaluative, until finally the evaluative dimension is entirely discharged; the remaining claims concern purely factual or descriptive properties of the work. Thus Goldman too eschews a strict division between superstructure and base.

We needn't go any farther in pursuit of Levinson's account of emergence or Goldman's account of justification. Suffice it to say that these authors, like many other present-day aestheticians, acknowledge the existence of aesthetic qualities and deny that they are reducible in any simple way to the non-aesthetic qualities that make up their base. Our task, in keeping with the opening of this paper, is to determine whether or not this is proof of the specialness of aesthetic qualities. If we grant that they can't be fully defined in terms of non-aesthetic qualities, then the possibility of their specialness remains open. But we may have even less of an intuitive sense of what makes a quality special than of what might make an experience special. I suppose what we're looking for is something like 'different in kind,' where that difference resides not in the way the quality is experienced but in its very nature.

Yet such specialness remains elusive. The authors discussed above have acknowledged a great variety of aesthetic qualities. (Recall the lists with which I began this section.) The very range of their examples discourages the hope of finding an essential shared trait that constitutes the specialness we seek. It certainly doesn't turn on whether we decide to be realists about aesthetic qualities. Most philosophers are not realists with regard to secondary qualities, yet these hardly seem special or exotic. All of us with functioning sense organs presumably have experiences of color, taste, texture, and so on. Nor can the specialness of aesthetic qualities lie in the fact that they are possessed only by works of art. We can aesthetically appreciate natural scenes, industrial artifacts, aspects of daily life, and more.

Maybe, then, the specialness of aesthetic qualities is relational. Perhaps it inheres not in the qualities themselves (for in the abstract, balance, delicacy, triteness, joy, and the like seem perfectly ordinary), but in the ways they interact with one another, emerge from or depend on their base properties, and so on. And of course these are just the sorts of relationships Goldman and Levinson were exploring.

This last suggestion points us in a new direction. Our investigation of aesthetic experience has encouraged a more integrative view, one according to which it is not particular qualities that are special. Thus no 'checklist' can be offered to circumscribe the realm of the aesthetic. Nor is it particular experiences that are special. Thus no one type of experience serves as hallmark of the aesthetic. Rather, the specialness of aesthetic experience, and thus its value, inheres in the way base properties, aesthetic qualities, and perceptual, intellectual, and emotional experience come together in our encounters with works of art. While this view might seem to recall theories that emphasize the organic unity of works of art, I believe it is logically independent of such accounts. It is, however, supported by claims Jerrold Levinson makes in another context. Characterizing aesthetic pleasure, he asserts that "Pleasure in an object is aesthetic when it derives from an appreciation of and reflection on the object's individual character and content, both for itself and in relation to the structural base on which it rests."[23] Levinson elaborates his claim as follows: "We do not apprehend the character and content of an artwork – including formal, aesthetic, expressive, representational, semantic or symbolic properties – as free-floating, but rather as anchored in and arising from the specific structure which constitutes it on a primary observational level. Content and character are supervenient on such structure, and appreciation of them, if properly aesthetic, involves awareness of that dependency...Features aesthetically appreciated are features thought of as qualified by, or even internally connected with, their underlying bases."

Value: Some Applications

I stated at the outset that a number of authors take the value of art to lie in the experiences it provides its viewers, readers, and hearers. For example, Malcolm Budd begins his book *Aesthetic Value* by announcing that "The value of a work of art as a work of art is...(determined by) the intrinsic value of the experience the work offers,"[24] while Alan Goldman claims that "It is in the ultimately satisfying exercise of [our] different mental capacities operating together to appreciate the rich relational properties of artworks that I shall argue the primary value of great works is to be found."[25] But our investigation has offered no reason to assume that the value of art exhausted by either (1) aesthetic experience, or (2) aesthetic qualities. I have in effect repudiated the framework, which I based on some isolated remarks of Peter Kivy, as overly simple. Thus let us dispense with the assumption that the experience of art is such that the presence of distinctive aesthetic qualities triggers a distinctive aesthetic

experience. Instead, let us close with some examples in which we investigate the interrelations of all the features we have been tracking in our investigation. Our goal is to ask in a more open-minded way just what we experience, and what, if anything, we appreciate, when we interrogate works of art. I shall briefly consider three examples – our interactions with painting, music, and literature. In each case, I shall offer some observations about base properties, aesthetic qualities, appreciative experience, and aesthetic value.

For a problem related to the art of painting, consider Richard Wollheim's notion of twofoldness, introduced in his book *Painting as an Art.*[26] Wollheim's claim is that when we encounter a representational painting, we are simultaneously aware of it as a pattern of marks on a surface and as an image of a scene in three-dimensional space. Surely at least some of our awareness of the surface marks on any painting would consist in awareness of what Hermeren, Goldman, Levinson, and others would call base properties. These are the non-aesthetic qualities on which our ascriptions of aesthetic qualities are based. Wollheim's claim is contrasted with, for example, a Wittgensteinian duck-rabbit account of representational art, one in which we switch back and forth at will between seeing the work as a two-dimensional array and as a three-dimensional representation, but cannot sustain both sorts of vision at once. What is noteworthy for our topic of aesthetic qualities and aesthetic experience is this: on Wollheim's view, the uncovering and fixation on a work's aesthetic qualities is not the goal of aesthetic experience. Rather than ascending from the perceptual to the aesthetic, and resting forever in that empyrean ground, Wollheim's account has us always partially rooted in the everyday realm of ordinary qualities. We maintain awareness of both the recognitional and the configurational aspects of a work, and part of our appreciation flows from this duality. That is, we marvel that these base properties, in this particular array, generated this representational effect. If this is correct, and especially if it transfers to examples of representation in other media and other arts, it requires that we rethink any privilege we may have unintentionally accorded to aesthetic qualities.

For a second example, consider the art of music. In an essay entitled "Whole/Part Relations in Music: An Exploratory Study", Douglas Bartholomew offers a Husserlian analysis of listening to music. Attempting to show "how Husserl's distinctions between types of parts and wholes shed light on musical structure, activity, and instruction," Bartholomew argues that presence and absence play a crucial role in our listening. Hearing a melody demands what

Husserl called retention and protention. This involves "...our sense of how the not-sounding tones are absent, or rather, the way in which these not-sounding tones are present....Thus, as the melody moves from beginning to end, the meaning of each tone is affected by the protention of what is to come and is increasingly enriched by the retentions of what has already happened."[27]

Bartholomew's essay invokes ontological claims that I don't have the time or expertise to explore, but I find his analysis of musical components and our access to them a fascinating one. It certainly requires that we complicate further any simple dichotomy between base properties and aesthetic properties, or even a more sophisticated continuum of increasingly value-laden qualities. How would we classify the protentive traits of a familiar melody? Surely they contribute significantly to our grasp and appreciation of particular compositions. Here we smudge over any tidy distinctions between fact and value, or between quality and experience, since we are, on Bartholomew's view, taking into account absent qualities, both those previously experienced and those not yet experienced. Moreover, doing so, if he is correct, contributes essentially to our understanding and valuing the work. Finally, Bartholomew's approach can be extended to apply to any art that unfolds in time. Narratives, too, must be kept in mind, their shapes estimated as they unfold.

Turning to the art of literature, Jenefer Robinson presents an interesting case in her essay "Style and Personality in the Literary Work." Arguing that individual style in literature is expressed in terms of apparent features (qualities of mind, attitudes, personality traits, and so on) that are attributed to the personality of the implied author , she suggests that we must take in facts of several different orders. One example she cites early on is an essay on the opening paragraph of Henry James' novel *The Ambassadors*. The author, Ian Watt, claims that some of the most notable elements in James' prose style include "the preference for 'non-transitive verbs, the widespread use of abstract nouns, the prevalence of the word 'that,' the presence of 'elegant variation' in the way in which something is referred to, and the predominance of negatives and near-negatives."[28] On Robinson's view, these stylistic traits ground our reconstruction of the personality of the work's implied author.

Combining Watt's analysis and Robinson's theory makes wonderfully clear the complexities that arise in reading and appreciating James' novel. To understand the tone of the novel, we must attend to a number of facts simultaneously on a number of distinct interpretive levels. We must, first and

foremost, read James' sentences and understand them. This is none too easy, in a novel that begins with the sentence "Strether's first question, when he reached the hotel, was about his friend; yet on his learning that Waymarsh was apparently not to arrive till evening he was not wholly disconcerted" and soon thereafter challenges its reader with this construction: "The principle I have just mentioned as operating had been, with the most newly-disembarked of the two men, wholly instinctive – the fruit of a sharp sense that, delightful as it would be to find himself looking, after so much separation, into his comrade's face, his business would be a trifle bungled should he simply arrange that this countenance should present itself to the nearing steamer as the first 'note,' for him, of Europe."[29] In doing so, we must also note peculiarities of style and diction, have some sense (if Robinson's theory is correct) of what personality traits such diction would ordinarily flag, as well as a sense of James' style in his other stories and novels, how it contrasts with the fiction of his peers, how the character of the narrator, Strether, is being portrayed, how Strether's character contrasts with that of his foils in the novel, and so on. Again, how might this endeavor be understood on a model that took only aesthetic quality or aesthetic experience as its constructs?

I have so far linked aesthetic experience with appreciation and understanding. I may have overemphasized the intellectual aspects of our response to art and underplayed the emotional resonances awakened. But single-minded attention to appreciation would also be a grave error. "Art" is not an honorific term, and there are many mediocre and appalling works of art, as well as compelling and inspiring ones. So let us briefly visit the aesthetic terms, qualities, and experiences unleashed by a meretricious work of art. Consider the opening paragraph of Daniel Mendelsohn's review of Bret Easton Ellis' new novel, *Glamorama*: "It's a mystery to me why some people are complaining that Bret Easton Ellis's latest novel is nothing more than a recycling of his controversially graphic 'American Psycho,' (1991). 'American Psycho,' after all, was a bloated, stultifyingly repetitive, overhyped novel about a fabulously good-looking and expensively dressed Wall Street sociopath who tortures and dismembers beautiful young women, whereas 'Glamorama,' as anyone can see, is a bloated, stultifyingly repetitive, overhyped book about an entire gang of fabulously good-looking and expensively dressed sociopaths who torture and dismember both women and men – and lots of them. Clearly, Ellis's authorial vision has grown broader and more inclusive over the past decade."[30] At the very least, this review introduces us to a range of aesthetic terms — bloated,

stultifyingly repetitive, and overhyped – that our previous authors may have overlooked! It clarifies the sorts of observations needed to ground judgments of originality, suggests a role for revulsion as a possible aesthetic response, and reminds us of the delights of irony. It is important that our aesthetic theories encompass judgments like that expressed in Mendelsohn's review as well as our responses to more worthy works of art.

Conclusion

I hope I have made some progress in sorting out the notions of aesthetic quality and aesthetic experience. The overall moral I draw concerns the complexity and interconnectedness of the notions that come into play when we address works of art. The closing examples indicate yet another variable that must be worked into the mix, that of artistic intention. For if we're tying the value of a work to the experience it generates in appreciative audiences, we need to know how far-flung a set of experiences can be before they no longer count as appreciations of that particular work. To adapt an example from Clive Bell, whose views were discussed in section 2, what if my appreciation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony comes to this: that it is my very favorite symphonic piece to daydream to because it lasts a long, long time, gets very loud, and has differently textured parts that support a varied string of fantasies. Surely this is not an acceptable appreciation of Beethoven's Ninth. It undercuts the composer's intentions in presenting the work, and conflicts with the implicit conventions of the classical concert hall. This is not to deny that works of art are subject to multiple interpretations and varied uses. There will no doubt be many critics whose verdicts will rehabilitate Bret Easton Ellis' latest novel. Yet their arguments must meet certain constraints. They must show that readers retrieve something of value, that this derives from properties of the work , and that it connects with the author's intent. Overall, our aesthetic experience is created from and responsive to a wide range of factors. A full account of such experience will trace the richness of these relations.

Notes and References

1. Peter Kivy, *Speaking of Art* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), p. 70. The actual sentence that was my taking-off point reads as follows: "Since the end of the eighteenth century, there has been a view widely held by thinkers of varying other persuasions that aesthetic

perception is not ordinary perception of some special species of quality, but, rather, a special species of perception of ordinary qualities."

2. Jerrold Levinson, "Aesthetic Supervenience," *Southern Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. 22 (1983) Supplement, pp. 95-7.

3. Experience might be a constituent of aesthetic value in yet another regard if we concentrated on theories of creativity like those of Croce and Collingwood. On such views, the value of art might reside not in a type of experience generated in its audience, but rather in one generated in its creators. That is, proponents of the view might insist that creative experience be of a certain distinctive sort – what Collingwood speaks of as clarifying an intuition ... While this family of views might indeed make experience of some sort criterial for both the existence and value of art, the experience seems so different in kind (or at least in locale!) from that being considered in our original question that I am not including it in my grid of possible answers to the problem.

4. For instance, we would eliminate those strands that combine a denial of aesthetic experience with a demand that such experience ground aesthetic value, and perhaps also those that combine a definitional reduction of aesthetic qualities to their factual base with a claim that aesthetic experience is the ordinary experience of special qualities. Thus 48 is simply an arithmetic result, the number of answers that exists before we sort Aesthetic Hypothesis," reprinted in *The Philosophy of Art: Readings Ancient and Modern* ed. Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1995), through them to see whether some combinations are incompatible on their face.

5. Clive Bell, "The pp. 100, 107.

6. One other phenomenon that is often mentioned as a proof of unfelt pain is the experience of dental work while under the influence of laughing gas. Those brave enough to choose this option rather than novocaine (and I am not among them) describe the experience as one in which they felt pain but didn't mind it. That is, the ordinary connection between pain and its awfulness was severed. Though I'm not entirely sure how to accommodate this example, I don't think it defeats the line I am taking here since the dental patients are still undergoing a distinct experience which they alone can authoritatively characterize. Thus privilege, incorrigibility, and immediacy remain linked.

7. Summing up the act of distancing in a fog at sea, Bullough states that "the transformation by Distance is produced in the first instance by putting the phenomenon, so to speak, out of gear with our practical, actual self; by allowing it to stand outside the context of our personal needs and ends – in short, by looking at it 'objectively.'" He repeats the out of gear metaphor a page later: "Distance, as I said before, is obtained by separating the object and its appeal from one's own self, by putting it out of gear with practical needs and ends. Thereby the 'contemplation' of the object becomes alone possible." Edward Bullough, "Psychical Distance," reprinted in *The Philosophy of Art: Readings Ancient and Modern* ed. Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1995), pp. 298, 300.

8. Bullough, p. 302. Bullough goes on to remark that: "There are two ways of losing Distance: either to 'under-distance' or to 'over-distance.'"

9. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Aesthetical Judgment,* reprinted in *Art and Philosophy,* ed. W.E. Kennick (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), p.510. Cp. A later remark: "The judgment is called aesthetical just because its determining ground is not a concept

but the feeling (of internal sense) of that harmony in the play of the mental powers, so far as it can be felt in sensation." (516) Kant goes on to argue that the existence of a common sense is a necessary condition of the possibility of the judgment of taste. "...it is only under the presupposition that there is a common sense (by which we do not understand an external sense, but the effect resulting from the free play of our cognitive powers)... that the judgment of taste can be laid down." (520)

10. Those involving free rather than dependent beauty, in the absence of both interests and concepts.

11. Frank Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts," reprinted in *Art and Philosophy*, ed. W.E. Kennick (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), pp. 542-3. Following Peter Kivy, I have spoken of aesthetic qualities throughout this paper. And since I do not draw any particular distinction between qualities and properties, I would use these two terms interchangeably. Sibley, by contrast, speaks of aesthetic terms and aesthetic concepts. I assume he understands these phrases such that both are properly used to pick out or refer to aesthetic qualities.

12. Levinson, p. 93.

13. Goran Hermeren, "Aesthetic Qualities," *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), vol. 4 p. 98.

14. Alan Goldman, *Aesthetic Value* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), p. 20.

15. The examples listed are — evaluative: beautiful, ugly, sublime, dreary; formal: balanced, graceful, concise, loosely woven; emotion: sad, angry, joyful, serene; evocative: powerful, stirring, amusing, hilarious, boring; behavioral: sluggish, bouncy, jaunty; representational: realistic, distorted, true to life, erroneous; second-order perceptual terms: vivid, dull, muted, steely, mellow; historical terms: derivative, original, daring, bold, conservative, Goldman, p. 17.

16. Goldman, p. 18.

17. Goldman, p. 19.

18. Goldman, pp. 19, 25.

19. Goldman, pp. 25, 46.

20. Levinson helps our understanding a bit when he distinguishes supervenience from emergence, noting that all emergent qualities are supervenient on their bases, but some cases of supervenience fall short of emergence, namely those in which the relation between the two levels is merely summative (p. 103).

21. Levinson, p. 108.

22. Goldman, pp. 24, 26.

23. Jerrold Levinson, article on "Aesthetic Pleasure" in *A Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. David Cooper (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1992), p. 332.

24. Malcolm Budd, *Values of Art: Pictures, Poetry, and Music* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), p. 4.

25. Goldman, p. 8.

26. Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 21, 73.

27. Douglas Bartholomew, "Whole/Part Relations in Music: An Exploratory Study," in *Philosopher, Teacher, Musician: Perspectives on Music Education* ed. Estelle R. Jorgensen (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 173, 181-2.

28. Jenefer Robinson, "Style and Personality in the Literary Work," in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology* ed. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, Ronald Roblin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), p. 455.

29. Henry James, *The Ambassadors* (New York: New American Library, 1960), p. 5.

30. Daniel Mendelsohn, "Lesser than Zero," review of Bret Easton Ellis' book *Glamorama* in the *New York Times Sunday Book Review*, Jan. 24, 1999.

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Launching out into the Aesthetic Depth

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If the body is taken as a companion in the search for wisdom, is it a hindrance or not? For example, do sight and hearing convey any real truth to men? Are not the very poets forever telling us that we neither hear nor see anything accurately? But if these senses of the body are not accurate or clear, the others will hardly be so, for they are less perfect than these, are they not?

Plato, *Phaedo*

The principle of the dual nature of things celestial and spiritual, and earthly and material is a powerful conceptual framework which leaves its seal on every branch of thought and experience. Ordinary ethnic, political, juridic, ethical and aesthetic vision are conditioned by it to such a degree that we find it hard to conceive of the lives of individuals and the processes of human history outside the grid which crucially houses the ideas of purity and impurity, right and wrong, the attractive and the repugnant, and so on. On the plane of common experience, the very alternation of night and day, birth and death seems to bear out and underpin the veracity of the dual framework.

Metaphysically, dualism distinguishes being and non-being, being and becoming, or again substance and process, selfhood, and selflessness, 'thingness' and nothingness. The philosophies of being, substance, selfhood, thingness are founded on the principal value of one, and those of non-being, becoming, process, selflessness, emptiness, on the principial value of zero.

Now, while we know that it is not the task of philosophy to solve the problems deriving from the concrete application of mental frameworks, it is certainly its task to recognize that they are mental frameworks, and that, precisely by virtue of their conceptual nature, they can be shaped and modified.

Few philosophical doctrines in Eurasia have dared to modify the framework based on the dialectical contraposition of opposites. One of these is the 'middle way' (in Sanskrit *madhyamapradipad*) advanced by the great Indian thinker Nagarjuna (ca. 150-250). and Buddhist thought as a whole has provided a powerful alternative to dualistic ossification. Conceptual frameworks based on the complementarity and interpenetration of opposites are no less at the basis of Taoist philosophy in China and of Shinto thought in Japan, each of whose roots are sunk deep in a holistic vision of the subtle forces interpenetrating things.

As we know, the Western approach to the philosophies of India and eastern Asia has gone through various phases, and it has taken a long time to recognize that the two most important contributions provided by the Asiatic philosophies are, on the one hand, the intrinsic connection between mind and nature, human intelligence and cosmic energy, and on the other, the fact that the vision of reality and the philosophical theories related to it, including the aesthetic theories, depend on the way in which the mental frameworks are structured.

In his *Oriental Enlightenment* J. J. Clarke traces the phases of the theoretical shock experienced in contemporary thought with the coming to the fore of process thought as opposed to substance thought a tradition which has been central in Western philosophy and which goes back to Aristotle. Charles Hartshorne, Clarke remarks, was one of the few scholars to have Adiscovered in Buddhism a way of thinking about the physical and the mental world which anticipated in many ways the approach of process philosophy, and advocated the study of Buddhism as a corrective to endemic errors in Western philosophy deriving from its long-held views about substance"[1]. N. P. Jacobson, a more recent exponent of process philosophy, claims that "Buddhism anticipated by over two thousand years the efforts of a whole series of philosophers in the West C Bergson, Dewey, Darwin, Fechner, James, Hartshorne, Whitehead, and Peirce to construe the world of events in their novel, emerging forms of togetherness" [2].

In the realm of theoretical aesthetics, the epistemic importance of Buddhist and Taoist frameworks has recently been highlighted by Kenneth K. Inada [3], and more than a few Japanese thinkers [4] are engaged today in this fecund line of research, which is albeit, unfamiliar still to the majority of Western aestheticians.

I should therefore like to contribute, in this article, to bridging this cultural gap by examining the way in which conceptual frameworks affect views on perception and on the phenomenology of aesthetic experience.

My analysis begins from a classic of substance thought: Plato's *Phaedo*. This is the Dialogue in which Socrates, in the last hours before his death, entrusted his disciples and friends keeping vigil with him in the prison of Athens with what is possibly the trickiest and most esoteric part of his philosophy. In fact, the doctrine of the immortal soul expounded in the *Phaedo* digs its argumentative way through the perilous, porous terrain of the natural aesthetic condition of human being. And the more determined that doctrine seems to shaken off that condition the more deliberately ensnared it becomes, and we ask ourselves: but is sensuousness (Greek *aisthesis*), which in the course of this Dialogue is appealed to no less than seventeen times, really the net which ensnares the soul in its bodily and earthly career, or does the relation between the senses and the soul, the sensuous and the intelligible spheres lead to an ambiguity, a principle of uncertainty nesting precisely where the two spheres enter each other's orbits, laying bare the appallingly neutral nature of becomingness?

The imminence of death accepted by Socrates with serene firmness gives his words a special charisma. The fact that in only a few hours Socrates the man will be a corpse, and that with him the philosopher will vanish too, compels his disciples dolefully to consider how subtle the dividing line is separating (but also the bridge joining) being alive from what is commonly identified as its opposite, being dead. The one state excludes the other and linear time does nothing other than mark the line between that which was and is no more and that which will be and is not yet. And it is this mental framework, on which Aristotle was to construct his logic, that now induces the disciples to formulate the question: "What *really* ceases when life is no more?"

This is no less crucial a question than that concerning the destiny of the soul once it has been liberated from the mortal body. And Socrates implicit reply (or Plato's through the mouth of Socrates) is that with the extinction of life the sensuous sphere is disactivated, the human being=s capacity to perceive and feel, and thus the mixture of play and sorrow, which is irreconciliable with the intelligible and rational sphere. Indeed, nothing that happens in the world of the senses is exempt from continual change, and whoever entrusts himself to his senses cannot ignore that they are the least reliable and most deceptive part of his being.

The chance to show how true this is urgent, and Socrates does not let the occasion slip. The chain that has been tightly gripping his leg is loosened by a prison guard. Socrates massages his numb leg and remarks:

> How strange a thing is what men call pleasure! How wonderful is its relation to pain, which seems to be the opposite of it! They will not come to a man together, but if he pursues the one and gains it, he is almost forced to take the other also, as if they were two distinct things united at one end (60, II) [5].

This could very easily be the observation of a Buddhist thinker: instability and ambiguity dominate the world of the senses, and impermanence is the only stable factor in this discontinuous continuity. Toshihiko Izutsu reminds us that "this is not only true of the external world in which we exist, but it is equally true of the world within us, the internal world of concepts and judgements. This is not hard to understand, because whatever judgements we make on whatever thing we choose to talk about in this chaotic world, our judgement is bound to be relative, one-sided, ambiguous, and unreliable, for the object of judgement is itself ontologically relative"[6].

However, we know very well that the provisional and mixed character of sensations is Socrates' main premise for demonstrating that through the senses it is impossible to reach the real and substantial plain of Ideas. But, *nota bene*, this is only half true. That is to say: perceptions (Greek *aistheseis*) are not in themselves conducive to the supersensible world, yet nevertheless, by using our senses C Socrates says to Simmias C we recover the knowledge we had previously possessed (i.e. before we were born).

Here the dual nature of perceiving, which is of crucial importance for an aesthetic foundation of knowledge, springs to the fore. Insofar as it is mutable and promiscuous it does not in fact lead to the intelligible world, and yet to the degree that memory is activated through it, perception becomes the indispensable instrument for acceding to knowledge: "For we have found it possible to perceive a thing by sight, or hearing, or any other sense, and thence to form a notion of some other thing, like or unlike, which had been forgotten, but with which this thing was associated" (76, XX).

In classical Greek the linguistic uses of *aisthesis* and its cognate terms are remarkably extensive. An intelligent, quick-witted man is called *aisthanómenos*, the verb *aisthánesthai* means not only to perceive with one's senses but to observe, recognize, understand, give attention to, and as for the

noun *aisthesis*, its range oscillates from physical perception to interior image and vision, as in passage III, LIX, where Socrates says that the inhabitants of the mythical 'real earth' see gods in visions (*aistheseis*). But finally the same dual meaning of 'sense' as we currently use it, puts us on the tracks of an archaic mental framework where semantic polarization has not yet ossified thought and language.

Let us now take leave of the *Phaedo*, cherishing its hidden riches. Inspecting the ambiguous nature of perception, a Hermes-like shuttler between the angelic and the earthly planes of reality, Plato caught a glimpse of a dimension of non-duality deeply concealed in the aesthetic shell, but his dual framework obstructed the way to it.

There are mountains hidden in the sky. There are mountains hidden in mountains. There are mountains hidden in hiddenness. This is a complete understanding.

Dogen, *Shobogenzo*, 'Sansuikyo'

In Buddhism - as Junijro Takakusu neatly explains "there is no actor apart from action, no percipient apart from perception; therefore no conscious object behind consciousness. Mind is simply a transitory state of consciousness of an object. There is no permanent conscious subject, for no fabric of a body remains the same for two consecutive moments as the modern physicists say. Buddhism contends that the same is true of the mind as well" [7].

There is no doubt that propositions like this provoke no mean intellectual shock in someone who is accustomed to locating 'thinking' and 'feeling' in the grid of dualism. For a mind not trained in multi-leveled cognitive inspection in Buddhist schools 'I think' and 'I feel' are in inconfutalbe truth of fact, as is the squared relationship between an experiencing subject and an experienced object. And when the experience happens to be aesthetically charged, as in the case, illustrated by Dogen's lines, of somebody contemplating mountains hidden in the sky or painted on a scroll or evoked in a poem, in this case too the squared relationship between an experiencing subject and an experienced object is not called into question. All the same, Dogen, and those who have trained themselves in multi-leveled cognitive inspection, assert that the squared relationship consists in an *incomplete* understanding; and that the route of access to a complete understanding, relative and provisional though it still may be, passes through

self-inspection where the 'I think'/ 'I feel' axis is set aside, and one proceeds by other means. Like the gardener monks of the stone gardens who train themselves to look at their garden as if they were being looked at by it.

A similar discipline where bodily faculties fully partake in a launching out into the aesthetic depth of "what is", lies behind the aesthetic theories (Sanskrit *rasa marga*) developed in the Indian Classic tradition, the advaitic (i.e. non-dual) epistemology of Kashmir Saivism having being one of its pivots between the VIII and the XII century, in a period covering Nara and Heian eras in Japan.

In *The Advaita of Art* Harsha v, Deheja provides the essential know-how to move into the jungle of *rasa* theories based on the six main orthodox schools (*sad darshana*), the Upanishads and the Vedas [8]. On one point Advaitic and Buddhist theorists agree, and it is on the selfless ground wherefrom springs the aesthetic shock (Pali *samvega*). *Samvega* - A. K. Coomaraswamy explains - is a state of agitation, fear awe, wonder or delight induced by some physically or mentally thrilling experience. When in the presence of a poignant work of art, we are struck by it, Athe blow has a *meaning* for us, and the realization of that meaning, is still a part of the shock,. These two phases of the shock are, indeed, normally felt together as parts of an instant experience; but they can be logically distinguished, and since there is nothing peculiarly artistic in the mere sensibility that all men and animals share, it is with the latter aspect of the shock that we are chiefly concerned. In either phase, the external signs of the experience may be emotional, but while the signs may be alike, the conditions they express are unlike. In the first phase, there is really a 'disturbance', in the second there is the experience of a peace that cannot be described as an *emotion* (italic is mine), in the sense that fear and love or hate are emotions" [9].

Once being made witness to his own emotions, the experiencing subject gets consequently detached from them. And this does not occur, and cannot occur in a trance or in a catalectic state, but only in the adamantine lucidity of a full and fully-rounded awareness.

The soul described by Socrates in the *Phaedo* as being re-absorbed into the pure world of Ideas is rooted in the same selfless ground of Buddhist awareness. The only difference is the conceptual framework adopted respectively by the Greek and the Asian mind.

Notes and References

(1) *J. J. Clarke, Oriental Enlightenment, The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 118.

2. Ibid. See there also note 11.

3. In "A Theory of Oriental Aesthetics: A Prolegomenon," *Philosophy East and West* 47 (2) (1997), Prof. Inada traces a seminal way to comprehend 'the 'dynamics involved in becoming as the basis for an aesthetic theory.'

4. I'm particularly referring to Sasaki Ken-ichi, the renowned aesthetician of Tokyo University, and a specialist in French studies. His *Aesthetics on Non-Western Principles*, version 0.5 (Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Akademie, 1997), marks a significant turn in his views re-oriented to the riches of Japanese aesthetic tradition.

5. Plato, *Phaedo*. This quotation and the following are from F. J. Church's version. Introduction by F. J. Anderson (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1951).

6. T. Izutsu, Sufism and Taoism, A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983).

7. J. Takakusu, *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy* Ed. By Wing-Tsit Chan and C. A. Moore (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1947).

8. H. V. Deheja, *The Advaita of Art*, Foreword by K. Vatsyayan (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996). See also Pramoda Ranjan Ray, Theory of Oriental Beauty (With special reference to Rg. Veda) (Sambalpur: First All Orissa Sanskrit Conference, 1974).

9. A. K. Coomaraswamy, "*Samvega: Aesthetic Shock,*" Selected papers: I. Ed. By R. Lipsey (Boston: Princeton University Press, 1977). P. 183 f.

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The Impenetrable Looking Glass: Plato on the Different Possibilities of the Visual and Literary Arts

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"...poetry has a wider range...there are beauties at its command which painting is never able to attain" Lessing, *Laocoon*,[1] chapter 8

Plato did not have to know the likes of Mapplethorpe to see salacious or violent visual images. They abound on classical and archaic artifacts: A panel from the Tomb of the Diver at Paestum depicts two symposiasts gazing at each other with obvious lust. An important kylix by the Amasis painter shows a defecating dog under each handle and on one side of the cup, two prodigiously endowed satyrs pleasuring themselves. The Parthenon Frieze, as Joan Connelly has so masterfully argued,[2] portrays a prelude to a human sacrifice. Yet Plato does not deem the visual artists ethically corrosive as he does the literary. This, even though in his *Republic* 10, he brings his most damaging charge against the poets by drawing an analogy with the painters in order to show how the poet exploits the fallibility of human judgment. Moreover, in the earlier books, he points to the morally suspect content of the literature of his time. Many scholars thus find his preferential treatment of the painter either baffling or logically inconsistent.[3]

In fact, it is neither. Plato treats the two types of art differently because, as I show in this article, he considers the aesthetic experiences of the two types of art to have different kinds of relation to our cognitive, emotional, and ethical lives. For Plato, as we shall see, irreducible aesthetic pleasure is a constituent of the aesthetic experience of poetry but not of painting.

Many proponents of aesthetic experience distinguish it from other types of interior events and in fact value it for bringing a reprieve from ordinary life. Some reject that separation, while still others reject the very existence of a unique

aesthetic experience, thinking it either a reducible concept or a philosophical fiction. Surprisingly, Plato, despite his reputation as a moralist about art, acknowledges the phenomenon of aesthetic pleasure at least in response to literary artworks and offers an alternative to the separatist model, one which, to my knowledge, has not been recognized as such in his work. His model, as we shall see, depicts aesthetic experience, however rapturous, as leading us to a deeper, more enduring (and, to him, deleterious), emotional involvement with the world. His analysis, though arguably problematic, provokes searching questions. In this article, I shall propose a new slant on Plato's controversial assault on literature show that his arguments provide an insightful, even if flawed, view on the nature of aesthetic experience itself. I also shall address a problem arising within Plato's theory of art—his tolerance for the painters—and I suggest why Plato might , without inconsistency, assume such a counter-intuitive stance.

I. Background

According to some theorists, the concept of an irreducible aesthetic emotion distinct from ordinary life wrongly isolates artistic involvements[4] from our political, emotional, and intellectual lives. This notion of the aesthetic, as they see it, is modernism's inheritance from the Enlightenment, the presuppositions of which they believe we should now abandon. Poststructuralists of various persuasions think that the aesthetic is a cultural construct along with all of our responses to art.

Some more traditional aestheticians find the concept too closely associated with aesthetically-driven theories such as formalism, the now-unfashionable New Criticism, or other cognitive theories of art, views they believe posit too much distance between the human observer and the artwork, or exile artworks to a hermetic realm of their own. Yet other philosophical aestheticians are uncomfortable with what they consider the metaphysical or epistemological implications of the aesthetic: the existence of a special faculty, the reality of aesthetic properties, a deceptive separation between an artwork and the historical moment at which it was created, or a mistaken phenomenological description of aesthetic experience which takes it to include a component irreducible to a set of other human experiences. It is no coincidence that one of the most vehement critics of this notion, George Dickie,[5] is also a prominent architect of the institutional theory of art. This theory construes the .artworld as a politically constructed community, not as a separate or transcendent one

with non-contingent standards of admission. On this view, the criteria for classifying something as an artwork include its political status but not something inherent to the work itself, such as formal properties or expressive content. Accordingly, experience of artworks, on this view, must be primarily cognitive and securely rooted in our social lives.

Such a theory contrasts starkly with views such as formalism and its various descendants, which essentially isolate the aesthetic sphere with its unique experiences and artistic struggles. Clive Bell, in the Preface to his now canonical *Art*, remarks that "Everyone in his heart believes there is a real distinction between works of art and all other objects." Moreover, he, like many others, thinks that aesthetic responses carry one away from quotidian life. The concept of aesthetic emotion, while not essential to, works well with, a theory that locates an artwork in a separate realm. There the objects of attention are the formal properties of an artwork, and the aesthetic or artistic properties that arguably supervene on them (however one analyzes supervenience).

One influential model, then, isolates aesthetic experience. This, according to some, vitiates currently prevalent ethical criticism (in its various versions), because such theories diminish the aesthetic, identifying artworks too closely with their subject matter and linking our appreciation of them with it.

More recently, some aestheticians have synthesized these approaches. While taking seriously the wide spectrum of objections to the idea of an irreducible aesthetic sensation, they also acknowledge the clear distinctiveness of artworks and our engagement with them. Jerrold Levinson offers a noteworthy analysis:

> Pleasure in an artwork is aesthetic when, regardless of which aspects of it are attended to, be they psychological or political or polemical, there is also attention to the *relation* between content and form -between what the work represents or expresses or suggests, and the means it uses to do so.

In order to attend to this relation, obviously we must attend to the relata; so we cannot sever the aesthetic from life—presumably even if the subject matter happens to be something purely artistic, for example the interrelation of colors or applications of paint.

Plato, too, takes the aesthetic experience of an artwork to be distinctive and yet closely related to the world. But, unlike Levinson, Plato, as I shall demonstrate, takes our apprehension of that " relation between content and form—

between what the work...expresses...and the means it uses" to interfere with the aesthetic experience.

The more intense the aesthetic response, for Plato, the dimmer our focus on the formal properties, the less agile our cognitive faculties. For Plato, the aesthetic experience leads us to a profoundly emotional engagement with the moral, psychological, and social world. But once we focus on the formal properties of a work, we cannot discern Levinson's ideal convergence of form and content. It eludes us, because in Plato's philosophical psychology, we cannot be absorbed in the content while attending to the formal properties of a work. This is one source of Plato's animus against the poets: the more keen our awareness of artistic and formal elements, the less we engage with the subject matter of the work; correlatively, the more we are engaged by the subject matter, the more the artistic and formal elements recede from our purview. Levinson's ideal is impossible for Plato.

Poets and Painters

Plato sets forth the painter as the paradigmatic creator of illusions. Yet despite his metaphysical and moral repugnance towards the image, he does not vilify the painter as he does the poet. Scholars find this odd. But they should find it more curious that he likens the two at all, given that he so often contrasts the poet and painter, sometimes invidiously. In the *Gorgias*, for example, Socrates avers that the aim of tragedy is to gratify the audience, to give pleasure. Given Plato's refusal to identify pleasure with excellence, the extent to which a tragedy provides pleasure to the many cannot be a mark of real goodness. What gives poetry the power to elicit pleasure are its formal properties such as "rhythm, meter, and music," for without these, poetry would be just speech" (502c) In the *Republic*, both books 10 and 3, he makes the same point more subtly. In book 3 (393d-394b), he demonstrates this tacitly when Socrates (in classifying narrative technique) describes prosaically the events narrated in a dramatic, emotionally charged passage from Homer. Socrates's recital of it is as compelling as a mere plot summary of *King Lear*: flat, monochromatic, and matter-of-fact. In book 10, he conveys the point differently:

> So great is the natural charm of poetry, for if you strip the works...of their artistic coloring...They are like the faces of those who were young but not beautiful after the bloom of youth has left them. (601b)'

Socrates presupposes a form/content distinction, and he deems the formal

or artistic properties those that evoke pleasure. This pleasure, he argues, is so absorbing that it overtakes judgmental activities, almost as if it takes over and governs the ego. This may be akin to the disinterested condition that some ascribe to aesthetic experience.

The poet does not aspire, according to Plato, to enlighten his audience about the human condition or reality. Nor is the poet concerned with the facts about the poem's subject matter. For reasons that will emerge, Homer, for example, did not need to know much about seafaring or military strategy nor Sophocles about technicalities of survival on a deserted island or the pathology of infantile foot binding. Thus, Socrates argues, most famously in the *Ion*, that the poet, unlike the painter, composes without knowledge or *techne*. Here he presents his fanciful account of poetic inspiration, which is a metaphorical expression of Plato's aestheticism with regard to poetry. Plato in fact realizes that the literary artist has a *techne*, but a different one than many think it to be. This will emerge in our analysis of the *Republic*.

In the *Gorgias*, however, where Plato forcefully underscores the carelessness of the poet, Socrates uses painting as an illustrative example of a *techne*:

> ...all other craftsmen do not each choose and apply materials to their work at random, but with the view that each of their productions should have a certain form. Look, for example...at painters...and all of the other craftsmen...how each one disposes each element he contributes in a fixed order, and compels one to fit and harmonize with the other until he has combined the whole into something well-ordered and regulated. (503d-504b)[8]

A *techne* or art has a clearly defined product or goal and a set of principles, including the structural principles that give the product harmony, order, and excellence. Socrates remarks (504a) that harmony, order, and integration are the marks of excellence in a given thing. This applies not only to artifacts, but to the soul as well (506e), in which, ideally, order arises from the efforts of others (for example, poets and orators) and oneself. Plato never deviates from this standard, though he amplifies it variously.

The painter, then, works methodically with an eye to achieving a specific effect. As Eva Keuls[9] cogently argues, most of the important advances in illusionistic painting predate Plato's creative period and were widely known. They included technical studies such as color theory, perspective, and optical

proportions—techniques involving precision and in which there was continuing study and experimentation.[10] Plato's argument in book 10 suggests that he himself was widely acquainted with them. Clearly, Plato associates painting with calculative skill and rigorous application of principles. He does not, though, speak of it as having the same dangerous charm as poetry.

The creation of poetry, however, is usually a different matter, for Plato. While his remarks on the poet's madness or divine inspiration may be ironic, giving the dig to an idea widely shared by his contemporaries, Plato does seem to think that the poet brings a certain sensibility to his task that the painter cannot. In the *Republic* book10, where he likens the two creators, he implicitly ascribes a sort of *techne* to the poet, but one not as rigorous as that of the painter. Let us turn to that matter now.

The Meaning of the Painter/Poet Analogy

Plato is, of course, well-known for exiling literary artists from the Republic. He does this in part because of the poet's irreverence, but chiefly because of the harm wrought by the experience itself. In book 3, he speaks of the creator's process as dangerous; in book 10 of the spectator's. The two arguments are remarkably similar, in that at the foundation of each is Plato's observation that inhabiting the vantage point of a fictional character is the essence of the poetic imagination, be it the creator's or spectator's. The difference between the one who creates or enacts a character and the one who receives it is that the poet (and in some cases, actor) is the source of the spectator's imaginative experience as well as his own. Moreover, the poet has a command of his formal materials, which he calls into the service of his imagination.

In book 3, he offers a labyrinthine argument (395a-396c) to establish that mimesis or representation of an evil, conflicted, passionate, or otherwise flawed character—in short, any character of dramatic interest—can harm the poet or performer in several ways. One is that he acquires dispositions to behave in ways that the enacted character behaves; but more importantly, the poet or actor must place himself in the private world of the character he represents, which tends to put him in sympathy with that character. Indeed, this is one of the chief functions of the poetic imagination: the poet creates in his imagination a world, or more precisely, a sliver of a world. Thus, in book 3, Socrates prohibits the guardians from imitating various sorts of persons and actions, remarking:

> They must not become accustomed to making themselves like madmen in word or deed. They must have knowledge of men and women who are mad and evil, but none of their actions should be performed or imitated. (396a)

Plato's insight is expressed elegantly by the contemporary American writer Cynthia Ozick:

> Imagination is more than make-believe, more than the power to invent. It is also the power to penetrate evil...to become evil...Whoever writes a story that includes villainy enters into and becomes the villain. Imagination...[is] becoming: the writer can enter the leg of a mosquito, a sex not her own...a mind larger or smaller....the imagination seeks out the unsayable and the undoable, and says and does them....more dangerous: [it] always has the lust...to wear out the rational...[11]

What does this have to do with painting? Let us turn to *Republic* 10 to examine the function of the painter/poet analogy in the structure of his argument. Basically, Plato portrays the painter also as inhabiting an imagined world; but it is not a world of human drama. Rather, the painter depicts the appearances of the visual world, as it, as Plato sees it, holding a mirror to the world or to an imagined visual world; for the painter is interested in the way things appear visually, not emotionally, according to Plato. His well-known and, at first, puzzling remarks about craftsmen in book 10 (597a-d) indicate that he views the painter as a maker, but unlike the craftsman, not of material things, but only of appearances of things from a given perspective under certain physical conditions (e.g., light, time of day, spatial location, season). The painter creates images of appearances: they are images not of things, but of sense-data that we correlate with surfaces of things. Socrates asks:

> What does the picture relate to? Does it imitate the reality of the model as it is *(hoia estin)* or its appearanceas it appears *(hoia phainetai)*? (*Rep.* 598b)

Naive perception, unaided by experience, Plato points out, distorts the real properties of sensible objects is a bed any different if you look at it from the side or fromany other point? Or is it not different, but [only] appears different? (598a) Similiarly, and the same things seem crooked when we see them in water and straight when we see them out of it (602c)

We should note, too, that Plato discusses the painter in the *Sophist* (235d-236c) where he distinguishes two kinds of image-making: (1) the making of images that, if not qualitatively identical to their originals, resemble them closely:

likeness or *eikon*-making (2) the making of images that are not like their models, but appear to be so: semblance or *phantasma*-making. Illusionistic painters and sculptors, he observes, fall under (2), otherwise they would not achieve verisimilitude:

If they were to reproduce the true proportions of a well-made figure...the upper parts would appear too small and the lower too large, because we see one at a distance, the other close at hand. (*Sophist* 236a)[12]

The painter may know nothing about the subject matter except its appearance, as Plato indicates in *Republic* 10. The painter contrasts with the craftsman in this regard. The violin-maker must grasp the principles of violin playing; the painter of a violin need only see the details of its appearance. Plato here anticipates the topos of Magritte's witty painting of a pipe, "Ceci ne pas une pipe."

As noted above, Plato acknowledges that perception endows objects with properties they do not, indeed cannot, possess. This perceptual distortion, he alleges, is the basis for *skiagraphia* (602d). While the exact meaning of this term remains controversial, some important scholars[11][13] speculate that it was a technique akin to pointillism or some type of impressionism so that the painted subject did not look real when viewed at close range, but did when viewed from a distance.

Plato implies that reason allows the painter to correct perceptual distortion. Illusionistic painting requires a scrupulous command of the various ways objects appear, a scientific grasp of the way perception distorts in a lawlike fashion.[14] It is not only the philosopher who must undergo arduous training, for the painter must as well if he is to portray accurately actual or hypothetical visual data. In vase painting and wall painting alike, technical experimentation was in the air, and according to Keuls, there seems to have been controversies over such matters as whether form should take precedence over color.[15] Clearly, painters had to possess a scientific sensibility. Ironically, then, the painter has to cultivate the rational, calculative faculty in order to be more sensitive to illusion. Therefore, the painterly imagination requires a kind of intellectual rigor. One can see the Platonic influence in the Renaissance ideal of the artist as scientist-observer, which since the 19th century has been eclipsed by the Romantic ideal of the artist as primarily emotional.

What is the basis of Plato's analogy between the passionate poet and the rational painter? The poet, like the painter, creates images, subjective

perspectival impressions; though these are not visual impressions but emotional, psychological, and moral ones. He is like a painter, first of all, in copying some subjects offensive to Plato (among others). Furthermore, the good poet knows the way the world appears to given types of psyches—people of passion, violence, weakness, and the like—but the poet (lacking Platonic philosophical training) does not understand the truth about moral and psychological reality. Homer can make us feel that the rage of Achilles is justified, without making us question whether in fact it is, so imaginatively absorbed are we in Achilles' sense of indignation. For Plato, then, the poet bears the same relation to the philosopher as the painter does to the craftsman.[16] In the poet's case, however, it is dangerous, whereas in the painter's it is not. Notice, too, that the painter's understanding endows his art with intellectual rigor; Plato is well aware of the craft the poet wields in fashioning his linguistic artifacts and the psychological understanding that an artistically successful poet must possess. But the poet's craft is inferior for two reasons: (1) the human psyche, for Plato, cannot be predicted with the same precision as the appearances of physical objects, and (2) the poet's creation, in moving us aesthetically, blinds us to moral principles, and blurs our sense of boundaries between the actual and the imaginary. Moreover, as we shall see, the painter, regardless of how well he executes his work, cannot transport us from life in the same way as the poet. Let us now consider why Plato embraces an aestheticism with regard to literature, but not to the visual arts. This disparity violates the intuitions of many proponents of aesthetic experience.

Painting and Aesthetic Experience

As noted earlier, a painter, for Plato, works with technical precision. In fact, by attending to formal characteristics achieved by this precision, the viewer enriches his own experience. Though a good visual artist uses imagination in his own creative process, he also sets into motion the spectator's imagination, but differently than a poet.

For Plato, the better the poet, the more deeply immersed we become in a fictional or illusionary world so that we cannot at the same time be both in the world of the poem and notice its formal features—these are different endeavors. Plato overlooks the possibility that we may appreciate a literary work aesthetically, by scrutinizing only its formal and artistic features, while remaining emotionally aloof from its emotive content. The aesthetic excellence of a work—the set of formal poetic features—is falsely seductive. The poet as seducer, ultimately deceives us, making us blind to the most vital ethical truths.

One reason for Plato's disparate assessments of the two kinds of artwork may be simply that he himself was not emotionally moved by pure visual form as he obviously was by the literary (for example, musicality, imagery, structure). In book 5, he speaks disparagingly of the "lovers of sights and sounds". This sort of pleasure, for Plato, undoubtedly would be subsumed under appetite *(epithumia)*—moreover, unnecessary appetite, and possibly lawless, unnecessary appetite.[17]

Another reason for Plato's preference may be his appreciation of the scientific precision necessary to achieve excellence in the visual arts. A poet deals with the chaotic human psyche. Whether human responses can be predicted with the same reliability as visual responses is a serious philosophical question; if they can be, then it would be the Platonic philosopher who would have this science, not the literary artist.

This putative imprecision afflicting literature seems insufficient to account for Plato's venom. Rather, it is his concern that the aesthetic element in poetry unseats our judgment, which he might not think possible for painting because of the difference in degree and in kind of the enjoyment we feel. Even if, therefore, a painter depicts lewd, violent, or perverse subjects, his work cannot undermine our rationality, not at any rate, our power to make rational moral judgments.

Even if it is Plato's own obtuseness towards visual art that leads him to this view, he nonetheless suggests an intriguing analysis of the nature of aesthetic experience of representational artworks. The painter depicts a world; the poet draws us into a world. The painter shows it; the poet makes us experience it. Plato evidently does not believe that we can imaginatively feel the world of the painting and emotionally sympathize with a subject depicted, as we can with a character in a well-wrought literary work. Kendall Walton, as part of his more global aesthetic theory, sees other possibilities in the visual arts. Speaking of Van Gogh's "Sorrow," a lithograph which depicts a seated woman in profile, with a bent head and her arms around her knees, Walton remarks:

I am not sure that I actually imagine being sorrowful myself when I contemplate the picture. I do, however, respond imaginatively to the woman....By imagining feeling as I do towards the woman I imaginatively understand her. And this...gains for me an understanding of what a particular kind of sorrow is like....All this began with the expansion of the picture world into a world of

make-believe big enough to include the perceiver as well as the contents of the picture world. Rather than merely Standing outside the picture and imagining what it depicts, Imagining a sorrowful woman sitting hunched...I imagine myself seeing her and observing her sorrow....[thus] imagining feeling about her and for her, and perhaps with her, in ways that enable me to understand her sorrow.[18]

Plato cannot accept this possibility. The painter, as we have seen, deals with the sensible world—that is his subject-matter. A visual artwork, for Plato, cannot "include the perceiver." Plato may seem to have no justification other than his own prejudices and aesthetic insensitivity. But his view, I think, has some merit. Let us consider why.

The painter cannot make us suspend disbelief or fall into illusion in the way the poet can, because the visual artist's product by nature stands framed by the actual world in a way that the poet's does not. By 'framed,' I do not mean 'within a frame', but rather that the work, be it, sculpted or painted, has finite spatial parameters and therefore is necessarily surrounded by the actual visible world. We are aware of that world even when we contemplate the artwork with rapt attention. Moreover, the observer views it from his own psyche, because we are at the same time subliminally aware of the actual world.

Being tethered, then, to actuality, we appreciate the artist's illusion, but do not become absorbed by it. However, Plato clearly sees the poet as capable of suspending our rational powers; we cannot experience intense aesthetic pleasure, together with the poetic technique and the work's formal characteristics. We cannot, that is, attend to the literary work as a literary work while experiencing the emotions and passions the work evokes. Unfortunately, Plato does not adequately account for how the poet can both craft and imaginatively understand the world he creates.

The viewer of a visual work cannot suspend disbelief in the way he can with a literary narrative. Even with a Dwayne Hanson sculpture or a trompe l'oeil mural, we may be tricked briefly or caught up short; but we may be not drawn into another world—if we were, we would not be struck by the verisimilitude. The effectiveness of such starkly realistic works lies in the cognitive dissonance that occurs once we realize it is a representation. Plato surely saw equally convincing representations, judging from the *Sophist* passage, to name just one. Scholars speculate[19] that realistic techniques were used in domestic wall paintings, and to judge by the vase paintings, some must have been quite piquant.

As I have argued, Plato implies that the two sorts of illusions—visual and literary—have different psychological structures. For Plato, the representational success of a visual work precludes our entering its world as we do that of a literary work; and correlatively, the affective intensity of a literary work precludes our appreciating its aesthetic and formal features. Even if he wrongly seems to think that this arises from the lack of aesthetic pleasure in the visual experience and from the psychological impossibility of simultaneous deep emotional sympathy and aesthetic appreciation in the poetic experience, Plato, with characteristic originality, impels us to reflect on the difference between the visual and the literary arts. The poet can lead us through the looking glass, which remains impenetrable for the painter.

Notes and References

1. Translated by Edward Allen McCormick (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).
2. Connelly, "Parthenon and *Parthenoi*: A Mythological Interpretation of the Parthenon Frieze,"*American Journal of Archaeology* 100 (1996): 53-80.
3. Some scholars deny that Plato tolerates the visual arts. But that tolerance will become apparent as we explore his arguments. Also, Eva Keuls, in her *Plato and Greek Painting* (Leiden, 1978) offers cogent arguments for Plato's relative indifference to the painters.
4. There is an ambiguity in the notion of aesthetic experience as to whether it pertains to artworks alone, or whether it also encompasses the experience of nature and beauty. In this essay, I use it in the more restricted sense.
5. Noel Carroll, makes this connection clear in his entry on George Dickie in *A Companion to Aesthetics*, edited by David E. Cooper (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Ltd, 1992), p.124.
6. Levinson, *The Pleasures of Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays* (Ithaca and London, 1996), p10.
7. Translations from the *Republic* are by Grube
8. Translated by W.D. Woodhead
9. Keuls, chapter 4, especially p.87.
10. Keuls, chapters 4, 5.
11. "Innovation and Redemption: What Literature Means," in *Art and Ardor: Essays by Cynthia Ozick* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), p.247.
12. Ttranslated by Cornford.
13. Keuls , p.38; Nancy Demand, "Plato and the Painters," *Phoenix* 29 (1977): 5-8.

14. Plato is keenly aware of perceptual distortion. See esp..Protagoras

15. Keuls, p.92

16. for a similar interpretation, see Christopher Janeway, "Plato's Analogy Between Painter and Poet," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 31 (1991): 1-12, especially 5-6; and his more recent *Images of Excellence: Plato's Critique of the Arts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp.134-136.

17. Plato offers his taxonomy of appetites most clearly in his *Republic*, book 9.

18. Walton, "Make-Believe and the Arts," in Susan Feagin and Patrick Maynard (eds) Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp.295-296.
Sarah Worth has written extensively on the relation between Plato and Kendall Walton. But she has not, as far as I know, approached it in this way or made this point.

19. Demand, 16

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Defining the Aesthetic

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We use the word "aesthetic" a great deal. We use the word most times as a modifier of "property" "object" "experience" "attitude" and "attention". The word "aesthetic" is used as both an adjective and as a noun, but when it is used as a noun, the word is offered as a short-hand description of an alternate, more precise description. For example, when an ordinary object is said to be "aesthetic" usually this means either (1) that the object is beautiful, elegant, balanced, etc., i.e. has some positive aesthetic quality, or (2) that the object is such as to offer one who would attend to it an aesthetic experience that is either readily available or rewarding in some way. The word is an adjective, and so to define the word is to define it as a modifier of some noun. The question now: which noun?

The history of the word's usage goes back to Alexander Baumgarten, who began using the word in a philosophical context in 1735 to refer to a systemic attempt at a metaphysics or psychology of art. He believed that the foundations of the arts are "sensitive representations" which are not merely sensations but are connected with feeling. Today we tend to think that aesthetics has to do with the sensuous aspects of experience. Of course, to say that aesthetics has to do with the sensuous aspects of experience is to give little in the way of an answer to students who want the word "aesthetic" defined. But at least it does, at least implicitly, narrow the field so that some discussion may begin. To talk about the "sensuous aspects of experience" is to talk about experience. This seems an appropriate place to begin. Let me say why.

Aesthetic Experience as Basic

Consider "aesthetic" as a modifier of "attitude." The philosophical tradition which focuses on understanding if there is an aesthetic attitude and what it consists in is nestled in England and Germany of the 18th and 19th Centuries, and America of the 20th. There are a plurality of aesthetic attitude theories, but certain strong trends allow us to describe the tradition as a whole without taking

too many liberties. Originally the focus was on how one could go about making correct aesthetic judgments. Lord Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, and Immanuel Kant believed that if one were to adopt the aesthetic attitude, one would be in the position to make correct aesthetic evaluations. They each described adoption of the aesthetic attitude as adoption of a perspective of disinterest, disinterest in the functionality of the object or event under consideration. (This is found in Hume's work, too, but he is traditionally not numbered amongst aesthetic attitude theorists.) This trend toward describing the conditions for correct aesthetic evaluation was replaced, through the work of such figures as Arthur Schopenhauer and, recently, Jerome Stolnitz, by a focus on the conditions for aesthetic experience. That is, instead of adopting the aesthetic attitude in order to make correct aesthetic judgments, the discussion turned to adoption of the aesthetic attitude in order to experience aesthetically, or, better, to have an aesthetic experience. If one were to adopt the posture of disinterest—for Schopenhauer and for Stolnitz — one would bring about an aesthetic experience. The content of that experience would be some aesthetic object or event, made an aesthetic object or event merely by the act of viewing it from this aesthetic point of view, through adoption of the aesthetic attitude.

If this is an adequate quick rendering of that tradition, it allows us to understand in a sort of hierarchy some of the nouns which "aesthetic" might modify. Aesthetic attention is attention directed toward aesthetic objects, events or properties. Aesthetic objects and events are the content of aesthetic experiences. Aesthetic attitudes, or, better, the aesthetic attitude (if there even is such a thing) is what allows us to have aesthetic experiences (which, even on the earlier view that adoption of an aesthetic attitude was for the purpose of aesthetic judgment, still places the having of an aesthetic experience logically earlier than attitude or judgment — that is, going on the supposition that one cannot make an aesthetic judgment in the absence of having an aesthetic experience). This leaves two things at the ground level in terms of discussing "the aesthetic": aesthetic properties and aesthetic experiences. I believe the latter is the more basic of the two. I believe this because it seems impossible to circumscribe the set of aesthetic properties (in either an objective or subjective way) such that a single definition would capture what it is to be an aesthetic property. This is true for the following sorts of reasons:[1]

(1) The attempt to attach objective properties either to the identification of the presence of aesthetic properties OR to aesthetic judgments has been

historically unsuccessful. This failure is explained, and argument for why such connections will not be successful has been offered, perhaps most famously by Frank Sibley.[1]

(2) It seems impossible to identify any set of objective properties which can be called *the* set of aesthetic properties. This is a problem of inclusion, but there is also the problem of exclusion. It seems impossible to designate any objective property as a nonaesthetic property. This is because there is no reason to exclude from being an "aesthetic property" any (objective) property which actually enters into the making of a particular aesthetic judgment. So no property which *could* contribute to an agent's aesthetic experience ought be dismissed (a priori) as a candidate aesthetic property. In determining the scope of what counts as an aesthetic property, it is not merely the internal relations that we need be attentive to, just as it is not merely the external relations that we need be inattentive to, in experiencing an object aesthetically. Many internal relations may be superfluous to our aesthetic experience of an object. For instance, it may not be necessary to understand what motivates Iago to be such a treacherous character to fully appreciate his place in *Othello*. It may not even be necessary to understand that Iago *is* treacherous to fully appreciate the play, so long as the actions which flow from his character serve to bind the "thesis" of the play together (the jealousy that Othello feels and what results from that). Conversely, some external relations may be relevant to our appreciation of the object. In knowing something of the conditions under which Mozart composed and of the instruments that were available to him at the time, one's appreciation of his music could increase. Another example, more clearly external, might be one's motivation to view a film more closely if it is known that the film had been nominated for an Oscar. This is not an unusual occurrence. The film's nomination is not an internal relation of the object, but the knowledge of the nomination might nonetheless change one's experience of the film for the better if her attention is colored or motivated by this knowledge. To argue a priori that some properties are not or cannot be aesthetic properties seems counter-intuitive to what seems to be our goal in viewing aesthetic objects. One ought not be interested in a boundary over which we must not tread in order to gain the best experience. We should be interested in loosening boundaries so

that whatever might contribute to the overall best experience might be admitted to our set of aesthetic properties. None of this is to say that we ought pay attention to each and every one of the object's properties (such a thing is not possible). It is, however, to say that all properties ought to be candidates for attention, so that no matter how *prima facie* incidental or peripheral a property, no matter how detached a property from the internal or formal set(s) of aesthetic properties, one might have the legitimate option of attending to that property given its efficacy to enrich her experience of the object.

(3) Aesthetic properties seem to be hybrid properties, mixtures of both objective aspects and evaluative aspects. As such, it will be impossible to offer a purely objective account of aesthetic properties. Monroe C. Beardsley writes

> The alternative that remains is to say that a distinguishing feature of A-qualities [aesthetic qualities] is their intimate connection with normative critical judgments — or, more explicitly (though still tentatively and roughly), that an A-quality of an object is an aesthetically valuable quality of that object. On this proposal, what guides our linguistic intuition in classifying a given quality as an A-quality is the implicit intuition in classifying a given quality as an A-quality is the implicitly recognition that it could be cited in a reason supposing a judgment (affirmative or negative) of aesthetic value.... This proposal has another advantage... to give a reason in support of a judgment of a work — or of any object, considered from the aesthetic point of view — you have to cite a quality of that object or of some part of it.[2]

This connection with the aesthetic value, or aesthetic values, as Alan Goldman writes,[3] places aesthetic properties in line with their most popular linguistic use, viz. as offering a defense or a justification for a particular broad evaluative claim about a work or natural object/event (that the object is beautiful, for instance). This also ties together aesthetic properties with the meanings and interpretations of the work.

A detailed articulation of the meaning of a work will inevitably cite aesthetic properties, properties that contribute to the validity of the interpretation being articulated, and given that an interpretation may well be thought of as a vehicle for enhancing appreciation of an artwork,[4] such citations will pick out aesthetically valuable aspects of the work.

(4) The 19th and 20th centuries are filled with objects which most viewers are happy to call art objects, yet whose aesthetic character lies not much at all with the sensuous but with the cognitive. Duchamp's readymades and Cage's music are clear examples. Aesthetics, to encompass discussion of Duchamp's art, cannot *merely* be a focus on the sensuous aspects of experience. Of course, on the other hand, it is also fair to say that were there nothing there to look at, Duchamp's work would not be art. An external object upon which one's attention is bent, even if that object functions simply as a trigger for cognitions of one sort or another, is necessary: an aesthetic object is necessary for an aesthetic experience. This is even true of Cage's music, and it is even true of some memory or act of imagination. There must be a content to that memory or "imagining" which acts as a focus, albeit perhaps only in a triggering way, for an aesthetic experience to occur. The point, finally, is that one cannot describe in *simply* objective terms the aesthetic properties of all those recent objects best labeled "conceptual art." Simple objective accounts of aesthetic properties are insufficient here.

(5) Finally, consider a Lockean-relational analysis of the ontology of aesthetic properties, one where aesthetic properties are understood as Lockean secondary qualities. The *relationalist* believes that (a) the basic properties of objects, such as lines, shapes, colors, are only in part responsible for the aesthetic properties of the object; (b) the "higher" aesthetic properties, such as harmony, grace and elegance, are not in the object per se, but are found in a *relationship* between the basic objective properties *and* the attending subject. Aesthetic properties exist as they are perceived to exist; aesthetic properties exist in a doubly indexical position: indexed to objective properties and indexed to the attending agent's subjective state. While advocates of this position do not deny that it is the objective properties of the object that form the bases upon which the attender's aesthetic experiencing (appreciation, evaluation) of the object is made, it is the *attending* of the agent which brings these

elements into actuality. Without the attending agent, the object's properties which we take to be the basis for our aesthetic experience remain in a potential state. Historically, this is a popular position; it can be found in the work of such figures as Hutcheson, Kant, and, more recently, Beardsley:

> The presence of value in the object does not of course depend on it actually being experienced — even if no one ever sees the Rhodora, it still retains its capacity to provide aesthetic enjoyment. So in a sense the value is independent of anyone's experience of it. But at the same time its value is not unconnected with actual or possible experiences, for its value is in fact defined in terms of such experiences.... Setting aside transcendent beauties or ineffable intuitions, the only ground that seems to be left for attributing goodness to works of art is the sort of experience they have it in them to provide.[5]

Yet another such account is that of Michael Mitias; he writes that "...Valse Triste has the capacity, i.e. potentiality, to occasion or actualize a musical experience which has the affective character of sadness."[6] Such accounts explain how aesthetic qualities function and how they exist. *If* such accounts are correct, strict circumscriptions around the set of all-and-only aesthetic properties from an objective point of view will be impossible.

All of these arguments taken together suggest that it is not possible to say, in any objective, essentialist, noninductivist way what an aesthetic property is. Perhaps then our time is better spent in focusing not on the objective, but on the subjective. That is, instead of focusing on what an aesthetic property is as a property of some object or event, it is better to consider aesthetic properties as properties of experiences (at least in the relational way described above). We may say that aesthetic properties are those properties which importantly and relevantly make up the content of aesthetic experiences. This allows us to privilege talk about aesthetic experience as foundational to understanding what "aesthetic" means.

An Inductivist Approach to Understanding Aesthetic Experiences as Distinct from Other Experiences

If everyone has had aesthetic experiences — and this seems an

uncontroversial assumption — then to some degree everyone can draw a line between those experience she has had which are aesthetic and those which are not. This line will probably be quite vague, but that does not matter. The point is not to draw the line so solidly that it can support a metaphysical discussion (of differences in kinds of experience) but to have the line be just strong enough to apportion some experiences from others. Then, in as strong or as loose terms as we wish and as our arguments will support, we can begin to say what is different about aesthetic experiences and nonaesthetic experiences. The doubt that such a line can be drawn so strongly that a metaphysical distinction can be defended, along with a general interest in ontological economy, may make the wiser choice the nonessentialist one, where aesthetic and nonaesthetic experience is on a continuum - albeit a continuum where at each end there are fairly clear examples of aesthetic and nonaesthetic experiences.

One philosopher who described aesthetic experience in a nonessentialist, nondivisive way was John Dewey. Dewey's account centers on what he calls "*an* experience." *An* experience is any garden-variety experience that one might have which has the character of being maximally unified and highly meaningful. *An* experience is a bounded organic whole; when a moment is sufficient to itself, is individualized, this is *an* experience. In aesthetic experience there is a heightened interest in the factors that constitute *an* experience, in the experience's "omnipresent form, in its dynamic construction, in its rhythmic variety and unity."[7]

The difficulty with Dewey's account is that it seems easily to admit of counterexample. There are many experiences which, it seems, adequately fulfill Dewey's aesthetic-experiential criteria, but which seem clearly nonaesthetic. A nondomestically-oriented spouse making his or her first grocery-buying trip might have an experience which fulfills Dewey's criteria, but this may not be the sort of experience that this individual would class with his or her aesthetic experiences.

Nonetheless, there are several things that are still attractive about Dewey's account.

(1) Dewey focuses on experience and the subjective in his treatment of aesthetics. The praises of this approach have already been sung.

(2) Dewey does not preventively exclude any properties or states, subjective or objective, from inclusion in some particular aesthetic experience.

(3) He does not focus on what *ought* to be paradigmatic instances of aesthetic

experiences, such as those had in galleries and concert halls. Instead he takes the experience of "the common man" as basic.

(4) Dewey's account is not divisive; it does not seek to draw a hard line between the aesthetic and the nonaesthetic. Dewey believed that every event has something of the aesthetic about it -B some, of course, more than others. Even an episode of brushing one's teeth might have something of the aesthetic about it, albeit something small. This nondivisiveness is much more in line with the way that people label some experiences aesthetic and others not. There are those who have nothing like an aesthetic experience though their attention is directed at, say, a work by Warhol. There are those who have aesthetic experiences looking at the butterfly and shell motif of a bathroom wallpaper. Dewey allows for the wideness of the range of aesthetic experience.

One of the key offerings of Dewey's account is that it offers us a deep freedom in understanding and discussing the nature of aesthetic experience. This is a blessing, to be sure. But it is also a bit of a curse because with such freedom comes the spectre of relativism, and with relativism comes the difficulty of not being able to offer any intelligible discussion about aesthetic experience. Was Dewey an aesthetic relativist? Probably. But he was no more a relativist in aesthetic discussions than any inductivist would be required to be. Different human beings have different aesthetic experiences than others, even though their attention is directed toward the same objects or events. The trick for Dewey was to describe, in the manner of a scientist, what was *generally* common to the ways in which common individuals labeled some experiences aesthetic and others not. This process is at heart inductivist, and so its results cannot be essential or necessary. However, to pick out a general pattern, as science does, is reason enough to listen closely to Dewey. Predictions about gravity are nonessential, but no one denies that it is better to predict that gravity will obtain tomorrow as it does today. Predictions that aesthetic experiences will have the character that Dewey describes — that they will be those experiences which are maximally unified and highly meaningful — are worthy of attention.

Monroe Beardsley takes up where Dewey left off. Beardsley's reliance on psychology surpasses Dewey's. Beardsley's last (published) analysis of what constitutes an aesthetic experience is this:

My present disposition is to work with a set of five criteria of the aesthetic character of experience...

(1) Object Directness. A willingly accepted guidance over the succession of one's mental states by phenomenally objective properties (qualities and relations) of a perceptual or intentional field on which attention is fixed with a feeling that things are working or have worked themselves out fittingly.

(2) Felt Freedom. A sense of release from the dominance of some antecedent concerns about past and future, a relaxation and sense of harmony with what is presented or semantically invoked by it or implicitly promised by it, so that what comes has the air of having been freely chosen.

(3) Detached affect. A sense that the objects on which interest is concentrated are set a little at a distance emotionally — a certain detachment of affect, so that even when we are confronted with dark and terrible things, and feel them sharply, they do not oppress but make us aware of our power to rise above them

(4) Active Discovery. A sense of actively exercising constructive powers of the mind, of being challenged by a variety of potentially conflicting stimuli to try to make them cohere; a keyed-up state amounting to exhilaration in seeing connections between percepts and between meaning, a sense (which may be illusionary) of intelligibility.

(5) Wholeness. A sense of integration as a person, of being restored to wholeness from distracting and disruptive influences (but by inclusive synthesis as well as by exclusion), and a corresponding contentment, even through disturbing feeling, that involves self-acceptance and self-expansion.[8]

Is Beardsley's account the right one? Does it accurately describe the general nature of aesthetic experience? There are a few problems with Beardsley's account:

(1) Item 3, "detached affect," clearly has a place in the aesthetic tradition; something like "detached affect" is present as a part of the theories of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Kant, Schopenhauer, Bullough, Stolnitz and others. However, "detached affect" fights with the intimacy that Dewey seems to describe in his offering of an account of aesthetic experience. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the recent work of Arnold Berleant. Berleant describes, in what certainly seems to be a following of Dewey, a great intimacy B sensuously, cognitively, and emotionally B with the object or event under aesthetic attention, or, better, with the object or event with which one finds oneself in aesthetic relation or involvement.[9] How does one reconcile, for instance, the knowledge or feeling that she ought not stand in the theatre, shouting out a warning to the still living Duncan with the knowledge or feeling that if she claps vigorously Tinkerbell will live or the knowledge or feeling that tears are appropriate as Butterfly prepares for her death? Some emendation or amendment to "detached affect" is needed.

(2) Both Dewey and Beardsley missed what I would call the "temporal" element or "evolving" facet of aesthetic properties. Recently Harold Lock, a native American, and I participated jointly in an exercise being run by the ecopsychologist Laura Sewell. Sewell asked Lock and me to imagine that one of us was a camera and the other a photographer. We were to walk around taking photographs. First, the photographer would describe the scene that was about to be "shot." Then the photographer, with a tap on the head of his companion, would open the camera's shudder — the companion's eyes — for a brief time. I found that my descriptions, when I played the photographer, were very static. I focused on formal elements and compositions in my "photographs." Lock's descriptions, however, were always lively and dynamic. He focused on movement, and so, implicitly, he focused on change. Many aestheticians have foci more like mine than like Lock's. They see objects and events in three dimensions rather than four.

Art objects, for the most part, are static. In fact, we go to great lengths at times to keep them from changing, or, if they have changed, to bring them back to how they were at the point of their creation. Since art objects are, for many, a primary source of regular aesthetic experiences, we tend to think about our experiences of those objects in

static terms as well. We tend to think that if we view a work of art, its aesthetic properties will present themselves to us (regardless of how they exist, i.e. objectively or subjectively). Once we have seen (heard, etc.) the detail of the work, we are ready to move on. This is typical. But it is not always rewarding. Lately art critics have offered advice contrary to the cafeteria model of viewing paintings in a gallery (or seeing a film or play once). We are now told to move through the gallery until we find a painting that catches the eye. Then we are told to stand or sit and view it for a time (perhaps twenty minutes). Once this investment is made, the chances that the viewer will have a rich aesthetic experiences are greater than they would otherwise be. It takes time, the point goes, for aesthetic properties to reveal themselves.

This can be extended even further. Aesthetic properties can and do continue to reveal themselves even after one has left an aesthetic object. Through memory, through continued associations made between the object and other thoughts and other experiences, the object's aesthetic richness can grow. A symptom of a good film (or, really, any good aesthetic object) is that one is motivated to view the film again and again, and each time that attention is rewarded, usually in new and different ways, but sometimes simply in appreciating the qualities of the film more deeply and poignantly. The point of this is that neither Dewey nor Beardsley seem to take into account that aesthetic experience is not three-dimensional; it is four-dimensional.

(3) "Is Beardsley right?" It may be that this question, given the very approaches that they took, is wrong-headed. No one over the age of two, since well before Sir Issac Newton, has needed much instruction on the fact that if an unattached object is released in mid air it will move swiftly and directly toward the earth. The effects of gravity are easy to see and generally easy to predict. Though gravity itself has been explained in a number of different ways - an attraction of an object for its home, a move toward greater maturity or actuality, as a field theory, as a bending of space - the effects of gravity are rather uncontroversial. Does this mean, then, that we ought cease our attempt to understand gravity, and thereby cease our attempt at greater precision regarding predicting gravity's effects? Now that airplanes stay in the air, should

we stop our inquiries into aerodynamics? The nature of science is such that it is an ongoing enterprise. Dewey and Beardsley realized that their projects were inherently inductivist, and that such nonessentialist projects cannot be said to be (finally) correct *or* incorrect. Morris Weitz described the concept of art, the definition of art, as evolving and growing.[10] With more "data" in the form of new works of art, new art movement and new artforms, the very concept of art will stretch to include those new data. This is how it must be with an inductivist approach to aesthetic experience. As a matter of course any such account will grow and evolve to include the additional data of new human beings having new aesthetic experiences. Today empirical psychology could probably give us a more accurate account than Beardsley's, but tomorrow it could give us a more accurate account still.

Defining The Aesthetic

What are the lessons to be learned about defining "the aesthetic"?

(1) To define "the aesthetic" is to understand that word primarily as a modifier, as an adjective. Uses of "aesthetic" as a noun are euphemisms, place-holders or short-hand for other, more precise, descriptions in which "aesthetic" is an adjective.

(2) To define "the aesthetic" is to understand why some experiences are apportioned off from others, the former labeled "aesthetic," the latter not. This approach is more basic than attempting to understand why some properties (or states) of objects (or events) are aesthetic and some not. Such properties only take on their roles as aesthetic properties as they are involved in (actual) aesthetic experience.

(3) Aesthetic experience is relational. Michael Mitias writes:

> any attempt to explain the aesthetic character of experience either from the standpoint of the perceiver exclusively or from the standpoint of the art work, or aesthetic object, exclusively is doomed to failure from the start - why? Because the aesthetic experience is a complex, organic, event; it is relational in its very essence. It happens, it comes into existence, in an encounter between two types of reality, a percipient and

an art work; and outside this encounter this experience does not, and cannot exist.[11]

The ontological account of the existence of aesthetic properties which best fits the relational character of aesthetic experiences is the Lockean one described above. Aesthetic properties are actualized in the relationship between aesthetic attender and the objective properties of the object under attendance.

(4) Aesthetic experiences must have aesthetic objects as their contents. These objects can be physically present, or they can be the products of memory or imagination, but there can be no content-less experience.[12]

(5) To understand the nature of aesthetic experience without prejudice is to adopt an inductivist approach. The principal reason that this is the correct approach is that the raw data that we are attempting to understand in all this (given (1) above) is actual aesthetic experiences. To attempt to do this in anything but an inductivist manner is to invite inevitable counterexample. We are not, in trying to explain the nature of aesthetic experience, in the business of saying to people under what conditions they will and will not have aesthetic experiences. Rather we must take the plethora of data with which we are faced and try to find some pattern or patterns to it. This is the naturalist, inductivist approach of Dewey and Beardsley. It is the right one.

(6) From what foundations does an inductivist approach proceed? When teaching ethics and the history of moral philosophy, I always say that the foundation of what we are doing is attempting to explain a certain sort of behavior: the verbal offering of moral judgments. That behavior is public, present, common and undeniable - even for the positivist who would reduce it away to nothing other than emotion. The same is true in aesthetics. Aesthetic experiences are private. But we cannot deny the publicness of behavior that I will call "aesthetic behavior": people talking about how they feel and what they think about objects and events they primarily attend to sensuously; people spending time creating objects/events designed for others to attend to (primarily) sensuously; people arranging those objects/events in ways that facilitate people attending to them (primarily) sensuously, to facilitate the longevity of that attention, to facilitate behaviors which indicate that those attending to these objects/events are rewarded through this attention. This is the

undeniable data that we use to pronounce that those behaving in these ways are experiencing objects/events aesthetically. All of us can cite examples of aesthetic experiences and nonaesthetic ones. All of us do in fact apportion off, in our individual continua of experience, aesthetic experiences from nonaesthetic ones. The trick then, or at least the trick for the aesthetician (and probably for the thoughtful aesthete, too), is to understand how and why we apportion our experiences as we do.

We cannot approach this the other way round. To set up the boundaries of the aesthetic (and here, of course, I mean "aesthetic experience") in order to facilitate classification of our experiences serves only a taxonomical purpose. On the other hand, we cannot do without some foundation from which to begin. The approach I champion here is foundational. It has to be, else we will be locked into a tight vicious circle of defining aesthetic experience as those experiences we identify, given some criteria or other, as aesthetic. The foundations I have used are two:

(1) People exhibit "aesthetic" behaviors.

(2) "Aesthetic" behaviors are those which focus primarily on the sensuous aspects of those objects/events under our attention.

Since our goal is the identification of what makes aesthetic experiences aesthetic, since our approach is inductivist, and, finally, since experiences are private, and as much as any other, incorrigible, we want to include as little as possible by way of foundations for our inquiry. Consider the way that we identify the nature of various colors. When I see something red, I have an experience of redness, and I may utter "that thing is red." An expert in optics may investigate this phenomenon, and note that I make utterances like this one when I am (i) in the presence of a surface which reflects light at such and such a wavelength, and (ii) when particular electro-chemical processes take place in my eye, optic nerve and brain. This would allow the opticist (optiologist?) to predict when I will make such utterances. The opticist may place before me an object which reflects light at the appointed wavelength and then upon noting my central nervous system undergoing the appointed processes, may say to me "you are experiencing redness now, right?" to which I will probably respond "yes." (Minus the central nervous system notings, this is the

process we use to teach small children to label colors the way we do.) But what if my response is "no" to the opticist's question? Suppose that all the physical pieces of the puzzle are in place, yet my response to the opticist is "no, I am not experiencing redness now." Can the opticist possibly convince me that I am wrong? Impossible. Such experiences are incorrigible, but more importantly, the entire account that these are the physical pieces of the puzzle which lead to the behavior "yes, I am experiencing redness now" are completely built upon my original "testimony," my original "color behavior." The foundations used in such an optical inquiry are two:

(1) People exhibit "color" behaviors.

(2) "Color" behaviors are those which focus on the sensation of reflected light as such (as opposed to the visual sensations of shape or size).

Without such foundations, optics cannot proceed. And so, without such foundations as those mentioned above, inquiry into the nature of aesthetic experience will either be viciously circular or will go no where. The data that people exhibit such behaviors is undeniable. But to say more than that these behaviors are about the sensuous aspects of experience is to render our enquiry into the nature of aesthetic experience tainted by our additional preconceptions. To say more would defeat the possibility of discovery, but to say less would give us no starting block against which to push off in our inquiry.

(7) There is another lesson to be learned about defining "the aesthetic" and investigating aesthetic experience. While a *purely* disinterested or disengaged approach to aesthetic experience is challengeable, and I believe ultimately untenable,[13] it is still the norm that when we attend to aesthetic objects we tend to view them without regard to what functions they may serve - apart, of course, from their "functions" as the contents of our aesthetic experiences. If this is true, then how do we account for our motivation to attend to aesthetic objects? If we do not attend to them for some functionary benefit, then why? The answer has to do, of course, with the fact that we value aesthetic experiences as aesthetic experiences. But what is it about aesthetic experiences that we find valuable?

Alan Goldman's recent account of aesthetic value focuses on the ability of engagement with an aesthetic object to provide one with an aesthetic experience characterized by the sense that one is in another world, another place and time, in a different set of world circumstances than one's everyday world.[14] I do not wish to argue here that this is a correct account, but one of the lessons that we learn from understanding that we are motivated to attend to aesthetic objects, to seek out and invest time in aesthetic experiences, is that we find something valuable about those experiences for their own sake. Accounts like Goldman=s must be taken quite seriously in understanding why these experiences have such a motivating power over us.

Notes and References

1. Frank N. Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts," *The Philosophical Review*, 1959.
2. Monroe C. Beardsley, "What is an Aesthetic Quality?" *Theoria* 39 (1973), pp. 61, 65.
3. "Aesthetic properties are those which contribute to the aesthetic values of artworks (or, in some cases, to the aesthetic values of natural objects of scenes).... We might conclude that works of art are objects created and perceive for his aesthetic values, and that aesthetic properties are those which contribute to such values." Alan H. Goldman, "Properties, Aesthetic," *A Companion to Aesthetics*, David Cooper, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995).
4. Alan H. Goldman, "On Interpreting Art and Literature," *Journal of Philosophy* (1990).
5. Monroe C. Beardsley, *The Aesthetic Point of View*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 63, 68, 80.
6. Michael Mitias, "Locus of Aesthetic Quality," *Aesthetic Quality and Aesthetic Experience*, Michael Mitias, ed. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), p. 36. Mitias makes this point even more eloquently, though somewhat less briefly, in describing how the lines and colors in Vermeer's *Kitchen Maid* give rise in the viewer to a sense of a flood of light; this is discussed at various points, starting on page 76, in his *What Makes an Experience Aesthetic?* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988). On page 77 Mitias writes: "So when I perceive it as light I move to a higher level of perception, or apprehension, in which I *actualize* (realize, concretize) a feature potential in the configuration I perceive." On page 151 he writes "Here I should stress once more than in perceiving the art work *aesthetically*... we

do not literally transcend or surpass the physical reality of the work. For the qualities which we intuit become actual only in perceive definite aspects of the sensuous form."

7. John Dewey, "Having an Experience," *Art as Experience* (New York: Capricorn Books, Putnam's Sons, 1934).
8. Beardsley, *The Aesthetic Point of View*, pp. 286, 288.
9. Arnold Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).
10. Morris Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1956.
11. Mitias, *What Makes an Experience Aesthetic?*, p. 8.
12. This is discussed by Mitias on pp. 79-82 of *What Makes an Experience Aesthetic?* under the heading "vehicle."
13. Consider the work of Berleant cited above; see also Fenner, "Aesthetic Disinterest," *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, XVIII:1-2 (1995), pp. 81-88, and chapters two and three of Fenner, *The Aesthetic Attitude* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996).
14. Alan H. Goldman, *Aesthetic Value* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995).

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BOOK REVIEWS

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason : Towards a History of the Vanishing Present,* Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 449.

At the very first sight the book exhibits its author's imagination in wilderness. The dedication page is itself symbolic of the author's academic detour from Taraknath Sen of Calcutta University (a legendary teacher of English literature during the 1950s and 60s) to Paul de Man (a legendary literary critic of Yale University) from Bengal (India?) to the United States (World?). In its critical bewilderment the book desires to leave no area of humanities untouched - it covers philosophy, literature, history, culture with an appendix on the dying intellectual illusion of deconstruction. The author writes :

> My book charts a practitioner's progress from colonial discourse studies to transnational cultural studies.... Based on my own uncertain scholarship, I sometimes conjure up a lexicon-consulting reader for the new cultural studies. The book tries also to address the 'sanctioned ignorance' of the theoretical elite and of the self-styled academic 'practitioner'... The chapters do not stand alone. They are loosely strung on a chain that may be described this way: the philosophical pre-suppositions historical exacavations and literary representatives of the dominant — in so far as they are shared by the emergent postcolonial also trace a subliminal and discontinuous emergence of the "native informant", autochthone and/or subaltern... This is a feminist book. Feminist issues are "pre-emergent" (Raymond William's word) in the first chapter. They are the substance of the rest. In the fourth, a critique of contemporary culturalist universalist feminism is offered.

Out of her many wise perceptions in the text just one critical judgement might be taken for consideration: her focus on the *Gita.* She differs from Hegel, Kosambi and Motilal who considered the text from three different perspectives- viewing Indian concept of history as a recurrence of the static principle, reading a politics in instructing the lower class to listen to the dominant Brahmins, a dialogue of the past and the present as the continuous past respectively. But Spivak proposes to read the *Gita* in terms of the play of Law and History. In the fourth chapter, when Krsna says that the wisdom that he wanted to impart Arjuna was not to be imparted for the first time in history, rather it was rotating through the ceaseless operation of natural law in course of the moving history. He first communicated it to the Sun god the symbol of natural law. Sun instructed it to Manu who imparted it to Iksvaku a human descendant of the divine solar energy. Thus Spivak reads that in such a circulation history as timing is subordinated by law as the graph of time. Krsna's purport is clear: one cannot obtain sequential verification by means of the rotation of life and death which defines (the movement of)

history. Krsna knows this because he is immutable spirit "born" only metaphorically, since inhabits his own nature through his own phenomenal possibility. Finally, Krsna represents both law and law giver. It is possible for him to avoid logocentrism because he gives *logos* outside the historical temporality since he carries the phallus outside the physiological obligation. "The graph of Time is a devouring of time as timing" (p. 55). Correlation of the chapters 4, 10 and 11 would annul Hegel's misconception of the Indian concept of history.

In the third chapter Chakravorty correlates the concept of history with Imperialism and the colonial subject: "If the project of Imperialism is violently to put together the episteme that will "mean" (for others) and "know" (for the self) the colonial subject as history's nearly-selved other, the example of these deletions indicate explicitly what is always implicit: that meaning knowledge intersects power. (p.215). The chapter on culture proposes to study the history of the present, i.e., "our culture" as a differanting event – a conflation of poststructuralism and postmodernism performed most brilliantly by Fredric Jameson in "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism". The present author shares the contradictions in Jameson's text. Jameson's linking postmodernism with multinational capital is queried by the author.

This big book is also a difficult one. A reader wonders at the author's ambition for a wild harvest of unworldly wisdom as the book exhibits or proposes to exhibit the whole range of scholarship attained by the ancients and moderns of both the hemispheres – eastern and western. The author's intellectual awareness is undoubtedly unchallangeable; but a reader surely misses the threads that unite the author's central proposal for making the book a "feminist" work. Perhaps the author has tried to interpret the whole range of a woman's experience of life in terms of intellectual gambling. Her success and failure are both only relative.

Michael H. Mitias, *What Makes an Experience Aesthetic*? Pp. 154; (ed) *Aesthetic Quality and Aesthetic Experience*, pp. 176 both published by Editions Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam, 1988.

Professor Mitias' pinpointed programme is to distinguish a kind of experience which is called aesthetic from another kind of experience which is not aesthetic. Experiencing any object or event aesthetically is to perceive the same *in a certain/different way*. An ordinary natural object or event such as a flower, a quarrel or an artwork such as a picture of a flower or battle given to our sense- perception has an identity or history of any other category than *aesthetic*. In what way does an ordinary perception differ from a perception called "aesthetic"? Thus there are three basic questions: (1) What makes an object a work of art - what is the essential nature of art, (2) What makes an experience aesthetic – what is the essential structure of the aesthetic experience and (3) How is the judgement of aesthetic evaluation possible – or under what conditions is an objective aesthetic judgement possible? Precisely speaking – what is the uniqueness of an object the experience of which can be called "aesthetic"?

Critics like T.J.Diffey have extended the aesthetic beyond the experience of the work of art – aesthetic can be extended to moral, religious, mathematical and metaphysical works or even to any other

ordinary natural objects and events. But Mitias is a traditional thinker who wants to analyse only the structure of aesthetic experience as an experience of *artworks only*. So Stolnitz's points come first – he means whatever the object may be, if we perceive it in specific way and enjoy it. Roger Scruton calls this way(s) attitudes which are distinctively called aesthetic attitudes expressed in judgements like "lovely", "beautiful", elegant, hideous – and these attitudes, determine the structure of aesthetic experience. But the question is why should these attitudes be called *aesthetic*? and how these external factors be responsible for determining the internal structure of a thing to which aesthetic is attributed? Therefore some inherent factors/qualities must be there in the object/event for which the term aesthetic be used. So the present author argues that "it is intelligible to say that the distinctive feature of any object or artifact *qua* art in possession of aesthetic qualities; that is, an art work is a potential aesthetic object, and this object is actualized i.e. acquires structure and concreteness, in the process of aesthetic perception or in the aesthetic experience." (p. 6) The qualities inherent in the objects which Mitias calls aesthetic must be sensory in the Kantian terms - of sensual category, different from other sensory qualities of other objects. All sensory qualities of all objects are certainly not aesthetic. Then what are these sensory qualities peculiarly called aesthetic?Two realities are assumed-the objects concerned must have qualities called aesthetic and the experience must be also of a distinct mode to perceive these aesthetic qualities – if any quality is not an aesthetic one, any experience is not also properly qualified to perceive this specific quality in the object. This seems a rational presentation of the whole problem. Now the question is how to qualify both objects and experience as the aesthetic?

Many philosophers like Hospers, Dickie and Price have denied the existence of a specific experience called "aesthetic". An attitude called "aesthetic" has also been denied, because the so-called aesthetic attitude is so subjective in character that it presupposes any/every objects' being aesthetic – ultimately eliminating any sense of aesthetic whatsoever it may be. On the other hand, Mitias has been maintaining an organic view of aesthetic experience – an encounter between the audience and the artwork. Drawing upon phenomenology, he defines an aesthetic object as an object of complex qualities construed in the process of aesthetic perception. His concept of aesthetic qualities is identified on ontological considerations.

The second volume contains ten essays by distinguished philosophers such as, John Fisher, Goran Hermeren, Robert Ginsberg and Mitias himself. The authors discuss different aspects of aesthetic qualities and experience, the locus and value of these qualities and experience. In the first volume Mitias offers an excellent account of the unity of aesthetic experience – he discovers also a single identity of this aesthetic experience counting the experience of different artwork under this single rubric. But in accounting for the unity of aesthetic experience, he warns that one should not look for some mental state or relation which "relates" the mental data which the work generates in the course of aesthetic perception. Interestingly enough, Indian philosophers of classical period have tackled the same issue in a different way. They do not identify any particular experience under which the experience of a varieties of art and natural phenomena can be enumerated.

According to them there is no common structure of any experience so as to count all these varieties under it. Even experiences of various kinds of art are different from each other depending upon the ontological status of these arts. What to speak of experience of nature? For example experience of dramatic experience which they call "Rasa" is not the one that defines the experience of visual arts. Further more, generation of Rasa in reading poetry is of different origin although in kind they are the same. Indian philosophers have been highly phenomenological in explaining aesthetic experience. In fact, as I have explained in another essay of mine, they have not worried themselves regarding a common rubric for all the kinds of experience of all the kinds of objects – art or non-art. Simply because, they reject the very idea of such a common experience. When they speak of the singleness of Rasa, they mean that the kind of experiencing all the emotions in a dramatic performance or poetic narration is the same, though they appear different only as they are tinged (*uparanjita*) or triggered (*rsita*) by difficult emotions.

Professor Mitias has devoted a long span of his scholarly life to almost this single issue of aesthetic experience. Therefore, he is much more judicious, perceptive, and convincing in analysing the issue than many other philosophers who have been one-sided sometimes even callous.

Gautam Biswas, *Art of Dialogue* : *Essays in Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd. in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1995, pp. 155.

As Kapila Vatsyayan writes in the foreword :

> Dr Gautam Biswas endeavours to comprehend art experience as dialogic in the sense of the pre-linguistic, linguistic and trans-linguistic aspects. Pertinently no closed theory of art is being propounded. Only the ideas of modern philosophers as also of Tagore and Radhakrishnan are being examined within the framework of phenomenology of dialogue. (P. IX)

In the chapters 2, 3, 4 Biswas outlines the phenomenological theories of aesthetics in several philosophies like Martin Buber and Michael Polanyi, and in the last two chapters he applies these views to the study of Tagore and Radhakrishnan. The design of the work is undoubtedly self-rewarding. In the theoretical chapters he deals with basic questions such as – what is our relation with works of art, what is the relation between man as an artist and his creations, what is the nature of the creative process, how is the meaning of a work of art determined and what is the ontological status of a work of art. But it seems, Biswas, in dealing with these issues, has not been directly acquainted with the founder authors in this area – particularly Roman Ingarden and Michael Dufrenne as also with some outstanding critics like Michael Mitias and Gregory Currie. Therefore his second chapter has not been a successful one. But the third chapter is a substantial one in its elaboration of Buber's concept of art as a dialogue : "... all art is from its origin essentially of the nature

of dialogue" (P. 51). Art is real only in the context of its relationship with the audience. " Its ontology is the ontology of this relation". Obviously, from the phenemonologist's views the one-sided approaches of Benedetto Croce and Ivor Richards are now-a-days outdated.

In fact the dialogic nature of art and its experience had long been expounded and explicated by the classical Indian philosophers of art, who, particularly with the Kashmirian Saivists believed the work of art as a part of the world consciousness. Dramatic performance, according to both Bharata and his commentator Abhinavagupta is basically a dialogue. No Rasa will be generated on the stage in the absence of the audience and by the same token, no Rasa will be generated in the audience in the absence of the performance on the stage. Thus the performance – audience dialogue is virtually the work of art. This is precisely what the continental phenomenologists have been trying to demonstrate. There are of course a great deal of differences in the technological analysis of the principal views but a number of similarities are traced in the structure of aesthetic objects, aesthetic qualities and aesthetic perception. Both Tagore and Radhakrishnan were indigeneous in their aesthetic formulations. Tracing their phenomenological affiliations is rather an anachronical approach since during their time European phenomenology did not come to the forefront of the intellectual environment as now they have come up. Even then, Biswas' interpretation and correlation broaden the scope of our understanding and intercultural reciprocation. We therefore welcome Biswas' contribution most unconditionally.

Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (eds), *The Troubadours: An Introduction*, Cambridge: The University Press (ISBN 0521 574730), 1999, pp. 330.

The Troubadourian poetic tradition has been extremely influential in the European literary history – from Dante to Ezra Pound through Cavalcanti, Patrarch, Chaucer, Spenser, Donne, Keats, Rossettis and Browning. These medieval courtly poetic tradition had an established contact with the Indian courtly tradition in its mystic aspect pertaining both to the Hindus and non-Hindu Buddhist. In a recent research I have co-authored with Dr. B. Dash this established cultural reciprocation unknown hitherto.

The present book collects sixteen essays on different aspects of both classical and later Troubadours highlighting the historical, rhetorical, philosophical and cultural perspectives of this celebrated literary tradition. Naturally, as it occurs in such anthologies, no particular perspective has been pinpointed, nor is there any attempt at discovering a new cultural perspective, although there are two essays on hermeneutics, intertextuality and dialogism in troubadourian writings. The editors have clarified the nature of this book in their prefatory note: "This book is both a collection of self-contained essays and a text book. The first three chapters offer an introduction to the historical context of the Troubadour lyric, and then to the two main genres of the Troubadour tradition, the *canso* and *sirventes*. The next five are broadly speaking literary-historical and offer an overview of the Troubadours with chapters on the three main periods of Troubadour production, on the women Troubadours, and on Spanish and Italian Troubadours, the aim being to show how the tradition evolved both in Occitania and abroad. The following five chapters give an account of the critical preoccupations of

recent Troubadour scholarship. The final three chapters deal, albeit selectively, with medieval reception". The editors also offer a brief history of Troubadorian studies till date, omitting surprisingly some of the cross-cultural approaches particularly by Michael Thomas who has been continuing some of the basic comparisons independent of Sukla and Dash (unpublished yet). That way, an essay on the intercultural perspective of the Troubadourian tradition would have added greatly to the value of the anthology.

But as it is, the book provides an excellent modern introduction to the Troubadours for both common readers and advanced researchers.

Noel Caroll, *Philosophy of Art : A Contemporary Introduction*, London : Routledge, 1999, pp. 273.

The Routledge Series of "Contemporary Introduction to Philosophy" is intended for introducing the topics concerned for a contemporary reader. All the books of this series treat the subject with updated information and remarkable comprehension. Apart from its being an excellent textbook for the graduate students, Professor Carroll's book presents the major issues in contemporary aesthetics most attractively for general readers as well as researchers. About the several arms of this book Carroll writes, "The first is informational. A great many of the theories reviewed in this book are what might be called canonical. They are theories that anyone who cares for art should know about. They have, in some cases, influenced art making and art appreciation for centuries and, in other cases, their influence has extended at least for decades.....In addition to supplying information, the book also attempts to be an introduction to techniques of analytic philosophy... how to go about analysing concepts, how to investigate proposed definitions critically, how to think about exceptions to theories, how to argue on behalf of positions you believe in.... Many of the skills that this book exercises involve ways of showing that theories and viewpoints are mistaken". (pp. 15-16). The criticism-oriented approach does not lead to any cynicism or scepticism. As the author rightly comments "There is still a great deal of room for improvement in the philosophy of art, and inevitably it is up to your generation to move the discussion to the next stage of philosophical development." The book therefore presupposes a constant and continuous growth of ideas in the intellectual world.

Among the topics dealt with there are issues of representation, expression, definition, identification, aesthetic experience and artistic form. Each chapter is provided with a summary and annotated reading list. By way of assessing the author's style of treatment, we may pick up the chapter on representation. The author classifies that he has considered only the pictorial representation or representation in pictorial art extending the area of this art beyond painting to film, photography, video and T.V. The controversiality in treating film, video and T.V. as (wholesomely) pictorial arts apart, for a theorist of art, it is really difficult to understand representation in pictorial arts without understanding the representational aspects of other arts- particularly literature. Since a major part of contemporary scholarship on pictorial representation (including the types of conventionalism and neo-naturalism as the author names) is founded upon or is related to theories of linguistic

and semiotic representation, correlation of verbal representation with pictorial representation is extremely relevant in any discussion of representation in the arts. Particularly, the author has most significantly commented that there is no unique form of representation in each kind of art. The same kind of representational strategies can be exploited by different kind of arts. In a way the author, subscribes to the Aristotelian hypothesis of mimetic theory that forms the ground of the sister arts theory. But viewed from a different angle, each art form maintains its individuality and distinction by the distinct medium it uses. A critic of the sister arts theory therefore rejects any comparison between pictorial art and theatrical performance. The difference lies in the very ontological status that distinguishes these two forms of art. As Abhianvagupta the celebrated Sanskrit critic (10th Century A.D.) has noted, both the art forms cannot exploit the same package of representational strategies because of their ontological differences. Theatre is not a pictorial art. Its audio-visual form cannot be called representational the way a picture is representational. Representational qualities of a theatrical performance is far more comprehensive and sophisticated than those of pictorial arts. To the annotated reading an excellent item might be added – Dieter Peetz, "Some Current Philosophical Theories of Pictorial Representation", (*BJA*, 27: 3: 1987) which has classified the principal pictorial representation theories most convincingly.

A.C. Sukla

Gregory Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, 1990, pp. 222 ; *Image and Mind : Film, Philosophy and Cognitive Science*, 1995, pp. 301. Both the titles published by Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

In the first title Professor Currie has offered an account of fiction grounded upon Grice's theory of meaning. He observes that a comprehensive study of fiction needs an intersection of three disciplines : aesthetics, philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. "The problems I choose to deal with", he writes, "and the manner in which I deal with them, make this book rather heavily weighted in the direction of the last two of these disciplines". Currie's analytical ability was sufficiently evident in his earlier Macmillan book *An Ontology of Art* (1989). Since then Currie has been making steady improvement in his intellectual career as evident in the titles under review. His seriousness in choosing the areas of study and his sincerity in probing the issues he studies involve are both noteworthy in contemporary critical theory.

While grounding his work on Grice's theory of meaning Currie has also considered the areas of possible world, counterfactuals, proper names, definite description and conventions. But he confesses that he has avoided any comprehensive account of these areas for two reasons : to avoid the increasing length of the book and presenting a poor substitute for the founder philosophers of these areas – Kripke, Lewis, Stalnaker.

In the five chapters of the book the author considers the vital issues of fiction such as the concept of

fiction itself, the story structure, interpretation, characters and their names, and finally, the nature of response of fiction. The book is wonderfully planned and the author has taken almost all the theoretical developments made in the twentieth century into consideration, and has critically analysed these issues for formulation of his own ideas. He makes it sufficiently clear that fiction is as much a logical issue as it is linguistic. Obviously he differs from the new critics, formalists and structaralists who have been wholly linguistic in their approaches. The idea that fiction is an autonomous verbal structure is considered as vague because the concept of autonomy is not adequately defined. It seems that the author is not in favour of any so-called autonomy of a fictional text, because, he argues undoubtedly most convincingly, that fictionality is a complex innteraction among the text, its author and the render. Each one constitutes its vital role in the world of phenomenon called fiction. In the light of his threadbare analysis the theories of reorder response, structuralism post-structuralism appear, only partial. If for the constitution of fiction each of the three elements text, author and reader are equally important, then the states of fiction is inevitably a relative one. For example, he argues that the fictionality of Doyle's novels require a qualified reader who must be informed about the late Victorian British society. The world of Holmes as fiction will be thus interpreted and apreciated relatively according to the qualification of the readers concerned, thought he never says that it is the reader who creates the fiction. The author is never dead for Currie, nor is the text all in all. Inevitably, in his rejection of the new critical approach, he does not agree with critics like Wimsatt and Beardsley that reading fiction is only a cognitive experience without any kind of emotional affect or involvement : "We read novels not only to find out what is true in them.... We read them because we hope they will engage us..." An emotional response/*participation*/engagement is admitted by him, and therefore he offers a brilliant analysis of the nature of emotion that engages a reader– it is neither purely subjective nor cognitive. "On the view I propose, emotions are much closer to actions in their logical structure than they are to feelings."

The second book of Currie is on the film medium. His exploration about this medium are dealt with in three parts: Representation, Imagination and Interpretation. He asserts that all representational media are not necessarily representational arts. In addition to its being representation a medium must fulfil some conditions in order that it may be a representational art. But he is not clear about these extra conditions "because the notion of art is itself unclear." One may not agree with Currie's scepticism ; but his honesty is certainly praiseworthy. He makes some sensitive observations regarding the relationship among painting, photography and film. All of them are representational media as well as representational arts. Film is a pictorial medium the movement of images in which is real rather than illusory. In painting an object or event is represented by something other than them, i.e., the medium — lines and colours. But in film, to follow the Aristotelian dictum, the medium and the object of representation are the same. But film is different from photography because in photography, to see a photograph of x is to see x; whereas both in painting and film it

is not necessarily so, because both the arts are necessarily fictional. Photography is necessarily a representational medium, but not necessarily a representational art. Its use as the medium in film is more pictorial than photographical. Similarly he argues for an ontology of film which rejects any psychological impression of the audience. In the third part of the book Currie provides a general theory of narration and its interpretation, and distinguishes cogently the ways film, painting and literature narrate differently.

Both the books are obviously fresh in their approaches and analyses of the topics that absorb the attention of a reader most creatively. One may not agree with all that he says, but one must highly enjoy the ways he says what he wats to say. Well-informed, unpretensive and fearless are Currie's texts.

B.C.Dash

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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David E. Fenner teaches philosophy at the University of North Florida. He received his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Miami (Florida) in 1991. In 1995 he was awarded a Ford post-doctoral fellowship and spent 1995-96 as Visiting Fellow in the Department of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews (Scotland). He is the author of *The Aesthetic Attitude* and *Ethics in Education: An Anthology* (forthcoming), as well as an assortment of papers in aesthetics, ethics, environmental ethics, and metaphysics/philosophy of science.

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Grazia Marchiano, Ph.D. at the University of Rome (1971), did her graduate studies in Indian philosophies and religions at Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, India. A scholar in comparative philosophy and aesthetics , she had made serious contributions to comparative and oriental studies in the Italian aesthetic community, running a series on *Aesthetics East And West* at the Rubbettino Publishing House (Soveria Mannelli), and another on *Oriental Philosophies* at Instituti Editoriali Intenazionali (Pisa-Rome). President of the Italian Association of Aesthetics (A.I.S.E.), she is Professor of Aesthetics and of History and Civilizations of Eastern Asia at the University of Siena-Arezzo, Where she has established "LORO"an International Study Group of Comparative Aesthetics, affiliating scholars from European and non-European countries.

She has published a dozen books in Italian, and translated works by A.K. Coomaraswamy and Nisargadatta Maharaj. In English: Editor of "Hindu Aesthetics", *New Observations*, New York No. 64, 1989, *The Major trends in 20th Century Aesthetics*, Guerini, Milan 1990; "Contemporary Aesthetics in Italy", *The Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, Sambalpur, Vol. 14, 1993; *Humanisms Facing Each Other*, Cadmo, Florence, 1996, *East and West in Aesthetics*, Instituti Editoriali Internazionali, Pisa-Rome, 1997. She has recently contributed to te Proceedings of the Pacific Rim Conference in Transcultural Aesthetics, Sydney, 1997; to the *International Yearbook of Aesthetics*, vol. 2, Lund, 1998; to the *Canadian Aesthetics Journal*, vol. 2, Ottawa, 1998.

Michael H. Mitias is Professor and Director of the department the Universit of Kuwait.of Philosophy at Millsaps College. He has contributed numerous essays to scholarly journals in the field of aesthetics and ethics. He is the author of *What Makes an Experience Aesthetic?* and *Moral Foundation of the State in Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. He has edited several books in the field of aesthetics.

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Robert Wilkinson is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the Open University (UK), where he is Chair of that University's aesthetics programme. Publications include: *Theories of Art and Beauty* (1991); *Thirty-Five Oriental Philosophers* (with Diane Collinson, 1994, soon to be re-issued, augmented, as Fifty Eastern Thinkers); *Biographical Dictionary of Twentieth Century Philosophers* (with Stuart Brown and Diane Collinson); editions of the *Tao te Chin, the Analects of Confucius, Sun Tzu's Art of War and The Book of Lord Shang* for Wordsworth Books.) His latest book, *Minds and Bodies* will be published by Routledge in 199. He is currently working on the reactions to Goethe of major philosophers, from the eastern and western traditions.

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